Global Scientific and Academic Research Journal of Economics, Business and Management
ISSN: 2583-5645 (Online)
Frequency: Monthly
Published By GSAR Publishers
Journal Homepage Link- https://gsarpublishers.com/journals-gsarjebm-home/

The Link between Sustainable Development and International Cooperation

By

Prof. Dr. Thomas Kaydor, Jr

Assistant Professor, IBB Graduate School of International Studies University of Liberia & Adjunct Professor, AME University Graduate Program, Republic of Liberia

Article History

Received: 05/10/2024
Accepted: 10/10/2024
Published: 12/10/2024

Vol –3 Issue – 10

PP: -14-24

Abstract

This study has argued that international cooperation is the fulcrum for sustainable development. First, it has determined that international cooperation impacts sustainable development because it is through cooperation that states can attain mutually beneficial outcomes to address both national, regional, and global challenges and problems. Without international cooperation, states will not singularly achieve their national interests. Simply put, all states are interdependent. Second, the study argued that international cooperation has evolved over time moving beyond the traditional practice of bilateral and multilateral cooperation to now include global governance that involves trans-governmental networks; transnational private governance; and transnational public-private partnership processes. These global networks are complex but help states and non-state actors to cooperate in attaining national, regional, and global development outcomes bordered on the security of states and the welling of their people. Third, the study found out that official development assistance (ODA) has been one of the functions of international cooperation, and that it has helped developing countries to attain some development benefits. The research concludes that there is a need to enhance international cooperation by enhancing diplomacy and ensuring that states and non-state actors further commit and fulfill the principles of global partnership as enshrined in goal 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals and that the developed world must assist developing countries to achieve economic growth and build strong institutions for sustainable development as required under SDG16 on the one hand, while developing countries themselves must take concrete steps to radically end extreme poverty and pursue the path to sustainable development on the other.

Keywords: *Diplomacy, Development cooperation; Economic Cooperation, multilateralism; Sustainable development.*

I. Introduction

This article critically examines the connection between international cooperation and sustainable development. It defines international cooperation and discusses how national and international actors engage in international cooperation processes to ensure that mutually agreed outcomes are obtained in the ultimate interests of the state. It also analyzes how the practice of international cooperation either stalls or enhances the attainment of national and global public goods. Finally, it looks at Official Development Assistance (ODA) processes as one of the key components of international cooperation that remains a key pillar to the achievement of sustainable development in the mutually beneficial interest of stronger and weaker states.

II. Research Method

The researcher has utilized the qualitative research method to conduct this study mainly using secondary sources like books, online sources, peer-reviewed journals, etc. According to Patricia Leavy (2017), “Qualitative research is characterized by inductive approaches to knowledge building aimed at generating meaning” (p.10). Researchers “use this approach to examine, explore; robustly investigate and learn about social phenomenon to unpack the meanings people ascribe to activities, situations and events” (Ibid). Qualitative research gives researchers “a depth of understanding about some dimension of social life, and the values underlying qualitative research include the importance of people’s subjective experiences and meaning-making processes or acquiring knowledge” (ibid). “Qualitative research is generally appropriate when your primary purpose is to explain, explore, describe, or narrate” (Creswell, 2018, pp. 75-76).

The key research questions addressed in this study are a). how has international cooperation impacted sustainable development globally, regionally, or nationally? b). Are there areas in which international cooperation has been effective than others? and c). What improvements could be made to make international cooperation more effective and efficient?

*Corresponding Author: **Prof. Dr. Thomas Kaydor, Jr.**

This article has attempted to provide answers to these three key questions.

III. Definition of International Cooperation

Axelrod and Koehane (1985) argued that "cooperation occurs when actors adjust their behavior to the actual or anticipated preferences of others" (p. 226). Hence, "international cooperation describes interactions to achieve common objectives when actors' preferences are neither identical due to lack of harmony nor irreconcilable due to the presence of conflict of interest" (Paulo, 2014, p.3). As Sabastian Paulo (2014) rightfully puts it, "the framework of international cooperation refers here to the structures and processes of policymaking beyond the nation-state and is used synonymously with global governance, globalism or multilateralism" (ibid).

International cooperation is used in economic theory as a collaborative initiative to analyze how states jointly partner in teams to achieve common goals and objectives and resolve common challenges that might impede collaboration. International cooperation occurs due to the provision or lack of public goods at national or international levels. This brings in the concerns of collective action that places international cooperation above national boundaries to joint international partnership for the production and provision of Global Public Goods (GPG). Additionally, development agencies, academia, and international organizations "have used and developed the concept to grasp deeper insights into trans-boundary or global challenges for development" (Paulo, 2014, p,3).

IV. International Cooperation for Public Goods Provision

According to Paulo (2014) "public and private goods are distinguishable based on the properties of the benefits they provide, and those benefits accruing from public goods are non-excludable and non-rival in consumption" (p.3). A good is non-excludable if no person can be prevented from enjoying its benefits (or at least not at reasonable cost). All citizens of countries are entitled to enjoy them regardless of race, tribe, region, gender, or nation-state.

Accordingly, "a good is non-rival if consumption by one person does not reduce the amount available for another; and goods that fulfill both criteria are 'pure' public goods" (Ibid). Such goods are important to international cooperation because it is their provision for which states and non-state actors engage in cooperation to meet the needs of national and global society.

For their part, Kaul, Grunberg, and Stern (1999, p.11) argued that "a pure global public good is marked by universality – that is, it benefits all countries, people and generations. An impure global public good would tend towards universality in that it would benefit more than one group of countries, a broad spectrum of the global population and meets the needs of present generations without jeopardizing those of future generations". The "goods conferring benefits that could in principle be consumed by the governments and peoples of all states are global public goods" (International Task Force on Global Public Goods, 2006, p.2). Therefore, "goods beyond national borders can be termed as global public goods" (Paulo 2014, p.4). Such public goods beyond the confines of nation-states can be international, regional, or transnational (Holzinger, 2008).

Millennium Development Goal 8 and SDG 17 respectively called for global partnership for development indicating that the "international framework conditions, such as developing and furthering an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system" (Paulo, 2014, p.5). This was solely in the spirit of international cooperation. Now that the SDGs are in full swing, Goal 17 further stresses the need for international cooperation for the achievement of the SDGs. Therefore, Paulo argues that "on the one hand, development cooperation focuses on supporting domestic policies in developing countries with the focus on poverty reduction" (Paulo, 2014, p.1). On the other hand, "all countries irrespective of their level of development have an interest in engaging in international cooperation to provide and preserve GPGs, such as a stable climate" (Ibid).

In view of the above, Keijzer, Krätke, and van Seters (2013) believe that in handling domestic development challenges (inequality, environmental degradation, urbanization, etc., several fragile states will continue to be dependent on ODA, but the provision of this assistance needs to be closely linked with other areas of international cooperation and requires a regional and global environment that is conducive to peace and stability. Additionally, Ray (2009, p.5) contends that "GPGs are becoming goals of development, and that the global community needs to accelerate the economic convergence of developing nations with industrialized economies and provide the human rights and basic needs for all".

For his part, Haddad (2013) asserted that common development problems are development issues that all countries, both rich and poor, confront. These include inequality, obesity, poverty, and dealing with ageing societies. Such problems cannot provide direct cross-border benefits and are therefore GPGs while collective problems are things that affect everyone and require collective action. Such collective issues include climate change, migration, environmental degradation, and food insecurity. In this vein, Barrett (2007, p.167) contended that "GPGs are provided by rich countries to support poorer ones to help them achieve their developmental objectives including the SDGs, stable climate, biodiversity, wealth creation, poverty alleviation, etc.".

V. International cooperation and global governance

There are several scholarly arguments regarding the similarities and differences between international cooperation and global governance. Koehane (1984) and other institutionalist scholars argued that cooperation can be more than a short-lived phenomenon, but rather a recurrent

*Corresponding Author: **Prof. Dr. Thomas Kaydor, Jr.**

happening sponsored by powerful states, but also coordinated by institutions at national and global levels. However, there are fears that international cooperation is static to the point that it does not readjust to instructional dynamisms. According to Risse (2012, pp.428–430), "global governance recognizes that non-state actors – such as nongovernmental organizations or firms – can be actors of the public steering beyond advocacy or expertise provision". This means that global governance structures go far beyond international cooperation because the "traditional mechanism of international cooperation is intergovernmental cooperation between states and the implementation of this cooperation through domestic policymaking within states" (Paulo, 2014, p.12).

This means that international cooperation and global governance focus on the same outcome of harmonizing competing interests amongst parties, but international cooperation focuses more on negotiations amongst state parties why global governance includes other network approaches through which "autonomous, but interdependent actors cooperate, complementarily mobilizing policy resources in situations where these resources are widely dispersed through trans governmental networks; transnational private governance; and transnational public-private partnerships" (Ibid).

Global governance has added to the traditional modes of international cooperation other aspects of cooperation. Some of these are the concept of "public-private partnerships that has been transferred from the domestic level to regional or global politics. From this perspective, states remain important actors given that they manage to work together with, and steer other actors" (Paulo, 2014, p.13). The second element is "trans-governmental networks that constitute the disaggregated state" (Slaughter, 2004, p.12). According to Raustiala (2002, p.20), "globalization has changed the role of the state, but it has not reduced it; thereby creating a shift in the focus of power – from states to something else termed trans-governmental networks through which state power is deployed and the forms by which states interact".

Slaughter and Zaring (2007, p.215) asserted that "trans-governmental networks imitate and respond to more flexible, mobile and regional or global forms of interaction engaged in by private actors". The "disaggregation of the state in functionally distinct parts is closely related to the emergence of the modern regulatory state; consequently, globalization and domestic regulatory structures have increasingly had to reach out beyond their jurisdiction by forming networks with their counterparts in other countries" (Raustiala, 2002, p.13). Based on this, one can argue that there are networks across the world that operate as private governments. Sabastian Paulo (2014, pp.14-15) defined private governments as "rule-making bodies without governments holding state powers".

The "defining characteristic of transnational private governance is that it potentially organizes political spaces equivalent to the effects that public steering mechanisms have" (Pattberg, 2007, p.52). Therefore, "private governance evolves institutional arrangements that structure and direct actors' behavior in a specific issue area; hence giving governing functions of states and intergovernmental institutions to private actors" (Falkner, 2003, pp.72–73). Büthe and Mattli (2011) referred to such private actors or institutions as private governance institutions that coordinate and monitor global processes from which national, regional, and global actors' benefit, an argument that Mueller (2010) agreed with.

According to Paulo (2014, p.16), the last aspect of these private governance networks is the Public-Private Partnerships (PPP). Transnational PPPs are "institutionalized trans-boundary interactions between public actors (governments or international organizations) and (for-profit and/or non-profit) private actors with the objective to provide public goods" (Schäferhoff, Campe, and Kaan, 2009, p.455). Reinicke and Deng (2000) also like PPPs as global public policy networks that have been elevated as an advanced institutional innovation that helps to fill the operational gap that globalization has caused between intergovernmental cooperation and domestic policymaking. This type of multilateral cooperation often offsets governments' failures by increasing efficiency and effective service delivery. The "three key functions of PPPs are service provision/implementation; standard setting; and awareness-raising/knowledge exchange" (Beisheim, Campe, and Schäferhoff, 2010, p.372).

VI. International Cooperation for Sustainable Development

The world agreed on the concept of sustainable development long ago when global leaders resolved "at the 1992 United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro where sustainable development emerged as one of the most urgent subjects for international policies" (Beisheim, Campe and Schäferhoff, 2010, p.372). This development criterion was introduced in "1976 in the Bariloche Model and given further impetus in 1987 when the Brundtland Commission proposed that sustainable development is development that satisfies the needs of the present without compromising those of the future" (Ibid).

Griggs et al. (2013) agreed that sustainable development addresses the immediate needs of today while safeguarding Earth's life-support system, on which the welfare of current and future generations relies. And as the world population continues to grow, there is a need for advocating for a "wholistic process that integrates international cooperation and regional or global collective action for the achievement of sustainable development through the SDGs especially recognizing the challenges including climate change, financial instability, transnational health challenges or food insecurity" (Paulo, 2014, p.1).

These global commons justify the need for enhanced international cooperation as a fulcrum for national, regional, and global actions to promote development. To be able to achieve the SDGs, emphasis needs to be placed on the

*Corresponding Author: **Prof. Dr. Thomas Kaydor, Jr.**

achievement of goal17 of the SDGs that emphasizes partnership for the goals.

One key aspect that needs to take place in the framework of international cooperation is the strategic, effective, and efficient delivery and management of official development assistance (ODA). It is important to note that the SDGs are one of the greatest efforts made by global leaders, but the 15 years' timeframe for their implementation seems to be very short if all the goals are to be achieved (Lim et al., 2018), most especially that COVID-19 has disrupted the economies of both rich and poor countries.

VII. International Cooperation and ODA

Official Development Assistance (ODA) has been a function of international cooperation. Developed and wealthy states support developing and middle-income states to help them overcome their internal national or regional development challenges. The fight against global poverty has come a long way. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were part of efforts to combat global poverty. When the MDGs expired by 2015, the SDGS were developed (United Nations, 2016). Developed countries continue to provide overseas official development assistance (ODA) or aid to help developing countries overcome extreme poverty. Aid is "a sum total of concessional loans and grants given to poor countries" (Moyo, 2009, p.7). "Concessional loans are monies lent at below-market interest rates for longer periods than ordinary commercial loans, while grants are monies given for nothing in return" (Ibid). In the researcher's candid view, grants are repaid for in other non-monetary ways. In short, grants have no signed monetary agreements but are paid for diplomatically.

Aid is divided into three components. First, humanitarian aid is provided in response to catastrophes and calamities like the Ebola virus disease outbreak in West Africa, flus, earthquakes, and tsunamis (Riddle, 2014). The COVID-19 pandemic that ravaged states in the early 2020s and other pandemics are natural disasters of such towards which humanitarian aid is provided. Second, charity-based aid is disbursed through charitable organizations to the needy (Moyo, 2009). Last, "systematic aid is payments made to recipient countries through bilateral or multilateral channels" (P.7). Aid also provides a fiscal space for cash transfer programmes that help to reduce extreme poverty (Kaydor 2021).

Aid is a post-World War II phenomena which began with the Marshal Plan aimed at Europe's reconstruction (OECD, 2014). Following the reconstruction of Europe, the OECD was founded in 1961 to help newly independent and poor countries undertake development programmes. Presently, the OECD has 38 member states; however, these traditional donors have been joined by new ones like China, etc. in providing aid to developing countries. Therefore, this study has also examined whether the world has succeeded or failed very badly in the fight against regional or global poverty in terms of aid effectiveness. It argues that the world has not failed so baldly in using aid to fight against global poverty, but that donors and recipient countries need to target aid towards programmes that directly get the extreme poor out of absolute poverty in low-income countries (LICs) and narrow the inequality gap between countries including the middle-income countries (MICs).

VIII. Some global debates on ODA

Sachs (2005) argues that developing countries are caught in poverty trap, physical geographic trap, landlocked country trap, fiscal trap, governance trap, cultural barriers, geopolitical trap, lack of innovation, and demographic trap. He asserts that "poverty itself can be a trap caused by a lack of capital per person" (p. 56). This means that the poor do not save enough physical and human capital because their entire income is spent on survival. Sachs (2005) concludes that "before the poor can get out of the poverty trap, they need a big push financed by increased foreign aid" (p.246). Although Sachs (2005) recommends increased aid to address global poverty, he downplays concerns about recipient countries' ability to effectively manage aid. If ODA will be mismanaged and cannot be used to reduce poverty in poor countries, then there should be no need for it; therefore, recipient ODA states and ODA providers must ensure that aid works well, effectively, and efficiently for the poor.

Conversely, Easterly (2006) dismisses the concept of poverty trap arguing that over the last 50 years, GDP per capita in sub-Sahara Africa has increased despite high fluctuations in growth rates. He maintains that "poverty traps are not an outcome of zero growth in low-income countries, and that poor countries have experienced positive growth between 1950 and 1970 at 1.9 percent annually but have failed to utilize said growth for poverty alleviation" (p.11). Therefore "it's not the lack of resources that necessarily keeps poor countries poor; weak institutions and corruption do, but the stagnation of the poorest countries has more to do with awful government than with a poverty trap" (pp. 42-43). For instance, countries with high corruption levels grow 1.3 percent less than those with low corruption levels.

The argument about most African states is that they are corrupt, and they can corrupt ODA. Moyo's (2009) debate below makes that argument. She assumes that the lack of effective socio-political and economic institutions leads to high levels of corruption and state failures in poor countries. Poor states must therefore build effective institutions to achieve growth and reduce extreme poverty.

Effective institutions will "allow the poor people take initiatives without experts telling them what to do" (Easterly, 2009, pp. 77-79). This position jives with SDG16 that calls for peaceful and inclusive societies; access to justice for all, and effective and accountable institutions at all levels. However, homegrown initiatives and the innovative ideas of the poor more often than not perish due to the lack of physical capital to start up. Therefore, the poor need more aid to start up and get out of poverty (Sachs, 2005).

*Corresponding Author: **Prof. Dr. Thomas Kaydor, Jr.**

For his part, Collier (2007) argues that over 980m people are "trapped in poverty and are heading towards a black hole" (pp.6-7). Africa hosts "70 percent of these poor; hence the continent is the core of the problem" (p.7). The "bottom billion are caught in either one of four poverty traps including conflict, lack of natural resources, bad governance, and landlocked geography" (p.5). These countries "have had no growth, and poverty cannot become a history unless the bottom billion grow" (pp.11-12). Collier (2007) agrees with Sachs' poverty trap scenarios; hence the world needs to focus on helping poor countries develop policies that give the poor and their children voice, hope, and the opportunity to grow and prosper. However, such help must be effectively provided by developed countries, and efficiently managed by developing countries. This mutual accountability process must be assured if aid must any significant impact on poverty reduction.

Moyo (2009) argues that aid "imposes unbearable debts which become a silent killer in poor states, make governments dull, and increase corruption amongst elites" (p.56). She contends that governments use aid to "fund public sector employment, and replace national revenues thereby leading to a "vicious cycle of aid whereby recipient countries become dependent, as donors enslave poor countries through foreign debt" (pp. 48-50). Moyo (2009) believes that "aid breeds civil wars, diminishes social capital, undermines the effectiveness of civil society, reduces savings and investments, causes inflation, chokes exports, and provides resources for corruption" (p.52). In summary, her argument speaks to weak institutions in poor, developing, and low-income countries leading to rampant corruption of aid.

The foregoing arguments sound reasonable but tend to ignore the enormous contributions development aid makes to poor states including fragile ones. For example, "38 percent of ODA was devoted to fragile states while 31 percent was earmarked for all other countries" (Fragile States, 2014, p.24). Moyo's argument also forgets the quantum role aid plays in humanitarian situations like the Ebola crisis, COVID-19, earthquakes, etc. Cutting aid from fragile states would further drive them into misery and extreme human suffering. Therefore, Moyo's (2009) argument should not be the basis for cutting aid to poor countries, rather aid should be increased, effectively delivered, efficiently managed, and accounted for by targeting initiatives that directly lift the poor out of poverty.

In the words of Lancaster (2007), "foreign aid began as one thing and became another". It began as a realist response to the deepening Cold War between East and West. While continuing to be deployed in the service of national interests, aid eventually created the basis for a new norm in relations between states—that better-of-states had an obligation to provide aid to less-well-of-states to better the human condition in the latter. That norm did not exist in the middle of the twentieth century. It was widely accepted and unchallenged by the end of the century. "For those of a theoretical bent, foreign aid must be understood through the lenses of both realism and constructivism. No one theory can adequately explain this twentieth-century innovation in relations between states" (p.212).

IX. Additional criticisms of ODA

The developed world and global financial institutions used many strategies to deliver ODA to developing countries. First, the basic needs strategy was adopted in the 1970s-1980s (Haynes, 2008). This strategy called for "synergies between national development policies, local community development needs, and international development assistance" (p. 29). It focused on the provision of sufficient food, clean water, adequate shelter, affordable healthcare delivery, and the completion of primary education for the poor (Stewart, 2006). This strategy failed because it was subsumed into the Cold War ideological divide which made aid a political tool rather than a developmental one, and due to misappropriation of aid by elites in the developing countries (Haynes, 2008).

Second, the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was adopted in the 1980s-90s (Haynes, 2008). It "encouraged fiscal and monetary discipline, free trade, free capital flow, and economic cooperation among states" (p.30). Aid was preconditioned on private sector-led development, spending cuts on basic services, reduced wages, limited state intervention in markets, and trade liberalization (Haynes, 2005). The SAP also failed because "it was externally imposed on developing countries, and it has increased poverty in poor states" (Haynes, 2008, p.31).

Third, the "Washington Consensus replaced the SAP in the 1990s-2000" (Thomas & Reader, 2001, p.79). It assumed that "growth and development are contingent on good policies and good institutions (Ibid; Haynes, 2008). Good policies meant "stable macroeconomic policies, liberal trade and investment, privatization, deregulation of state-owned assets; while good institutions meant democratic governance, secured property rights, independent central banks and transparent cooperate governance" (Haynes, 2008, P.33). The Washington Consensus arguably failed because it ignored the strategic and fundamental role of sovereign nations and actors without state authority in delivering human development goals (Haynes, 2008), though Williamson (2005, p.33) argues that "this was not a global policy prescription, but rather a measure for Latin American countries that faced economic challenges beginning 1989" regionally. Notwithstanding, some components of the Washington Consensus like secured property rights, independent central banks, stable macroeconomic policies, etc. remain relevant to date but are not mutually exclusive in the domain of development.

The MDGs were the predecessor of the SDGs in terms of efforts to reduce global poverty. In the MDGs, Goal eight called for global partnership for development. The current SDGs have Goal 17 that focuses on global partnership for development. At the end of the MDGs, 'only four targets were met' (World Bank, 2013, p.4). Thus, the successes and failures of the MDGs have sparked controversy. For instance, Munoz (2008, p.1) argues that Africa failed to meet the MDGs because it had poor starting conditions including weak institutions, conflict, and inflexible assistance'. This argument

*Corresponding Author: **Prof. Dr. Thomas Kaydor, Jr.**

sounds good because all regions had different levels of socio-economic and political conditions (Easterly, 2009); hence, the need arose to have disaggregated set targets based on the reality in regions and states under the SDGs. However, poor starting conditions cannot be an excuse for Africa and other regions doing poorly in meeting the MDGs. Poor countries need to take responsibility of their own development priorities as agreed in the Accra Agenda for Action (2008).

Conversely, Poku and Whitman (2011) argued that the MDGs have significantly reduced global poverty. Those living "below US$1 daily in 1981 reduced from 40% to 18 percent in 2004; then US$2 daily fell from 67 to 48 percent in said period" (Chen & Ravaillon, 2007, p.1). Without the MDGs, the current levels of global poverty reduction would not have been possible. The SDGs are still being implemented; therefore, one cannot judge their failures or success. However, "global poverty has reduced mainly due to growth in China and India, but there were more than 700m people living less than US$1 a day by 2015" (Ibid, pp.1-2). The COVID-19 pandemic has even increased global poverty across the globe.

About US$134.8b of net ODA was spent on developing countries (OECD, 2013). This showed a decline in aid to LICs and fragile states and tends to support claims that developed countries exploit poorer countries whereby more resources leave developing countries to support development in rich states. For example, Health Poverty Action (2014) argued that "Sub-Saharan Africa receives US$134b each year in aid, but US$192b is the value of resources exploited from Africa; hence, a negative ODA balance of US$58b" (pp. 5-6). This simply means that the resources sent from developing countries worth more than the ODA that they receive. Therefore, developing countries need to properly manage their resources and stope exporting primary goods. Export of primary goods is an export of jobs and other opportunities.

Most OECD countries have defaulted on the 0.7 percent of GNI committed to help developing countries (UN Millennium Project, 2006). Only Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and UK have met the target. The US, Germany, France, Japan, and the rest have defaulted (UN 2013). This raises further questions about the developed countries' commitment to help their poor counterparts. It has also sparked debate about the relevance of aid among scholars like Sachs (2005), Easterly (2006), Collier (2007), Moyo (2009), Riddle (2014), etc. whose views on ODA are discussed herein already.

Aid has some positive impacts in developing countries, though its correlation with poverty reduction still demands more empirical research (Kaydor, 2021). First, ODA avails funding to undertake discrete development projects like building of schools, clinics, hospitals, roads, bridges, and provision of electricity and safe drinking water in developing countries (Riddell, 2014). Second, aid is used to support refugees, displaced persons, fight diseases, and address disasters (Ibid). Third, it sometimes funds parts of national budgets thereby bridging funding gaps for development programmes in poor countries. For example, "donors like the US, EU, WB, and IMF provide direct budget support to fund poor countries' health sector" (WHO, 2008, p.4).

Fourth, ODA helps to build capacity of developing countries. For instance, the Australian Award scholarship trains citizens of developing countries to support their development initiatives. Fifth, ODA supports developing countries to meet global development targets (SDGs, 2016). Sixth, donors support civil society organizations (CSOs) to undertake development projects, and advocate for transparency and accountability (Riddell, 2014).

Conversely, Riddle (2014) argues "that aid works, but neither reaches nor assists the poorest and most marginalized" (P. 7). Moyo (2009) argues that donors continue to give aid amidst ODA's failure arguing that the some "aid monies are being used to pay the salaries of at least 500,000 staff of WB, IMF, UN agencies and registered NGOs" (p.54). Many times, aid monies are wrongly targeted towards priorities unimportant to recipients and therefore sometimes get corrupted (Moyo, 2009). This ties in with donors' preconditions for aid, which compels recipient countries to agree with donor priorities instead of national development goals.

Also, multilateral management of aid undermines recipients' ability to effectively monitor aid flows and develop national capacity to lead development programmes formulation and implementation (Riddell, 2014). This also leads to 'lack of hard data to measure impact of aid on poverty reduction, hindering evidence to determine whether development outcomes are caused by aid or other factors' (p. 8). Sometimes too, donors can default on funding pledges and commitments based on their domestic interest (Sachs, 2005). Therefore, Carol Lancaster (2007) is right to argue that "aid priorities are mostly dictated by donor countries' national interests rather than the receiving states" (p.212).

These problems associated with ODA increase the need for effective aid management. Donors themselves have acknowledged some of these challenges and have therefore initiated aid effectiveness strategies as agreed in several consensus documents on aid effectiveness. Both donors and recipients agreed on the use of country systems and program-based approaches, demand-driven capacity development, increased aid predictability and transparency of aid flows, donor harmonization to reduce aid fragmentation, and inclusion of private sector and businesses in aid coordination and delivery. The CSOs must hold both donors and recipients accountable. However, CSOs themselves need to be accountable for donor monies they receive to fund some of their programmes. Furthermore, to make aid effective, three fundamental issues need to be addressed.

First, aid must address current global poverty dynamics. In 1990, more than 93 percent of global population of the poor resided in LICs, and one-third lived in fragile states; but by 2010 three-fourths lives in middle-income countries (MICs) while only one-third lives in LICs, and 23 percent in fragile states (Sumner, 2010). These figures have even more troubling now because of COVID-19 which has increased poverty levels in all countries across the globe. These changes

*Corresponding Author: **Prof. Dr. Thomas Kaydor, Jr.**

challenge the future design of poverty reduction policies and aid delivery. This heterogeneous poverty context demands that ODA is diversified to strategically meet the needs of MICs and LICs.

The problems of MICs are not necessarily the lack of resources, but rather the equitable distribution of resources and the inability of governments to undertake pro-poor and inclusive growth, build effective institutions, and capacitate the poor. Therefore, aid to MICs needs to address social exclusion and inequality to ensure that the benefits of growth are equitably shared amongst all citizens. For LDCs/LICs, aid needs to focus on social safety nets, social protection, and the determinants of growth including education, health, effective institutions, food security or agriculture, technology transfer, export promotion, and fiscal as well as monetary policy reforms.

Second, the emergence of non-traditional donors leads to competition in the aid market. Kondoh et al. (2010) argued that these new donors provide more aid alternatives for development. For instance, the Chinese Government sometimes grants aid to countries and ensure that Chinese companies implement the projects. This ensures that the projects are completed in real-time. However, Naim (2007) argued that some of the new donors undermine aid effectiveness and promote bad governance, autocracy, and corruption in developing countries. This competition might crowd out old donors and make aid less effective due to unconditional aid modalities by new donors. However, these arguments are contestable due to the following reasons.

First, no aid is unconditional. For instance, Chinese government aid is said to be unconditional, but it requires recipient countries to sever all ties with Taiwan. Using aid to restrict the sovereign powers of poor countries from recognizing Taiwan is more conditional then making democracy and human rights a prerequisite to aid. Second, while net ODA was US134b from traditional donors in 2013, China's aid to Sub-Sahara Africa alone was US$ USD210.2b in the same year (Xinhua Global Times, 2014).

Most of China's aid as well as aid from India, Brazil, Russia, and other new donors fund infrastructural projects that traditional donors do not usually fund. Most developing countries therefore favour the new donors who support such infrastructure projects that national budgets cannot undertake. Third, aid is based on moral, economic, and political persuasions; hence no country or group should control the aid environment. The traditional donors must see new ones as partners in development rather than competitors undermining the aid landscape. Both old and new donors need to build synergies and effectively deliver aid to poor countries as agreed under the aid effectiveness modalities. After all, in the view of this researcher, all ODA is conditional.

Additionally, aid to fragile states needs to be used to mitigate humanitarian crisis and simultaneously address causes of fragility. Fragile states' governments do not have the capacity to deliver core state functions (Fragile States, 2014). Many are "recovering from conflict and embarking on peace and state building processes, experiencing long-term or recurrent conflicts, insecurity, or high levels of criminality and violence" (p.16). Back in 2014, the OECD reported that about 1.5b people live in fragile states, 70 percent of which have experienced conflicts since 1989. Presently, the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the situation by making the entire globe fragile. This fragility undermines the capabilities of donors themselves to presently meet commitments made to developing states. This means global poverty might further increase. This could adversely undermine the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Finally, fragile states lack transparent, and accountable systems to distribute resources, and are forced to institute generous tax exemptions for FDI attraction which affects tax base thereby undermining citizens' tax payment. They experience distrust in governments, capital flight, high levels of corruption, criminal activities, money laundry, illicit drug trade bribery. Stability and development cannot easily obtain amidst such challenges. Therefore, donors need to support fragile states in the areas of peace, security, and ensure that such states commit to country-led, and country-owned transitions out of fragility, effective resource management, alignment of aid with development priorities addressing root causes of conflict, building of trust with emphasis on legitimate politics, peace and security, justice, and economic transformation. If these suggestions are soberly considered by donors and aid recipients, the impact of ODA might far exceed what it is currently.

Although ODA is of the essential elements of international cooperation through which developed states help the developing ones to experience economic growth so that poor countries themselves will not remain aid-dependent. They too must intentionally apply efforts to invest in alternative economic growth corridors to gain financial resources that will help them leap out of poverty and become contributors to the achievement of sustainable development.

X. Economic Growth an alternative to ODA

National economic development depends on the availability of fiscal resources. Without economic growth, national development cannot obtain. Hence, Kaydor (2021, pp.7-8) agrees with Michael Todaro and Stephen Smith that "economic growth is an increase in a country's real level of national output that is a function of an increase in the quality of resources including education, increase in the quantity of resources & improvements in technology or it is the increase in the value of goods and services produced by every sector of the economy" (Kaydor, 2021). Economic Growth can be measured by "an increase in a country's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP)" (Ibid). So, once a country accrues more financial resources, "its capability to increase investment in poverty reduction processes is enhanced. This signifies that economic growth accounts for an indicator of wealth that shows the number of resources available to a particular state, region, etc." (Ibid).

*Corresponding Author: **Prof. Dr. Thomas Kaydor, Jr.**

Kaydor (2021) further argues that "countries can use economic growth to invest in poverty reduction strategies like construction of affordable public schools, clinics, housing, safe drinking water supplies, and other public utilities that might help the extremely poor get out of poverty" (Kaydor, 2021, p. 8). Although economic growth does not explain the quality of life that people live in a society, (Hausmann, 2015), "what it does is that it increases national wealth and therefore avails the opportunity for countries, regions, and the world to reduce poverty and solve other social, political, economic, and environmental problems" (Kaydor, 2021, p.8). This argument confirms claims by Todaro and Smith (2015) that economic development is mostly dependent on economic growth.

Hence, Kaydor (2021) further confirms that "economic growth remains a fundamental entry point to poverty reduction through social cash transfers, subsidies to the poor, and the provision of affordable services. This further supports the argument of Ricardo Hausmann" (p.8). He argues that "there are huge differences in income across countries of the world: the richest countries are 200 to 300 times richer than the poorest countries in per capita terms, and that one of the targets of SDG1 is to ensure that the poor and vulnerable have equal right to economic resources and ownership and control to natural resources" (Ibid).

SDG4 calls for ensuring an inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all while goal two focuses on ending hunger and malnutrition in all forms. Some of these goals and their targets are will not be met in several parts of the world by 2030. Therefore, some governments sometimes engage in cash transfers to assist poor families to either find food or send their children to school or for them to pay for medical services" (Kaydor, 2021, p. 8). Cash transfer programs help the poor to overcome extreme poverty sometimes.

Admittedly, one cannot discuss an end to extreme poverty without referencing international cooperation. Independent nations cannot adequately avail fundamental social services without talking about maximizing economic growth opportunities because economic development cannot obtain without economic growth. Simply put, to gain economic growth, states must export more and import less. This means international cooperation must remain the conduit through which poorer countries can interact with richer countries in the import and export domains to gain economic growth.

Emmanuel Boon (2009) rightfully puts it correctly when he outlined some key objectives of international cooperation as "re-activation of economic growth and development" (p.16). The coordination of macroeconomic policies should take full account of the interest of all countries, particularly the developing countries and the countries with economies in transition; building an open and credible multilateral trading system is essential for the promotion of growth and sustainable development; scientific and technological capability is increasingly important in the development of developing countries.

The international community should therefore support the efforts of developing countries to create and develop endogenous scientific and technological capability; the necessity to respond to the need for satisfying the basic needs (food, health, education, and housing, etc.) of all members of society.; substantial resources are called for to enable developing countries, especially the least developed, to cope with the objectives and operations of Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs), and threat of human activities to the environment is a common concern of all countries (Boon, 2009, p.16).

Unarguably, Boon (2009) was right to assert that "economic policies should therefore have as their ultimate objective the betterment of human living conditions and ensuring sustainable development" (p. 16). When the living conditions of people around the globe are improved, then peace and security might be fully guaranteed to allow sustainable development to occur.

XI. Conclusion

This study was intended to address three main questions. These questions include a). how has international cooperation impacted sustainable development nationally, regionally, or globally? b). Are there areas in which international cooperation has been effective than others? and c). What improvements could be made to make international cooperation more effective and efficient? This research has found out that international cooperation impacts sustainable development because it is through cooperation that states can attain mutually beneficial outcomes to address national, regional, and global challenges and problems. Without international cooperation, states will not individually achieve their national interests. Simply put, all states are interdependent and must diplomatically engage with each other in pursuit of their national interests (the security of the state and wellbeing of its people).

Although international cooperation positively impacts sustainable development, global, regional, or national pandemics like COVID-19 and Ebola grossly disrupted progress towards the achievement of global development. Will the world still achieve the global development goals by 2030? What should global leaders do differently to be able to achieve these goals by 2030 despite the COVID-19 that disrupted and other pandemics like Mpox that disrupt global development achievement? These are some contemporary questions that scholars in the 21st Century need to find answers to as the world moves towards the end of the global goals in 2030.

Unarguably, international cooperation impacts sustainable development through global governance and diplomatic channels. It has evolved over time moving beyond the traditional practice of bilateral and multilateral cooperation to include global or regional governance that involves trans governmental networks; transnational private governance; and transnational public-private partnership processes. Such global networks are complex and sometimes stall progress in mutually attaining common goals for national and global

*Corresponding Author: **Prof. Dr. Thomas Kaydor, Jr.**

development, but at the same time, they avail opportunities that ease the burdens of nation-states in terms of meeting national, regional, and global demands for the well-being and security of all peoples across the globe.

As things stand, there is a need to enhance international cooperation for the attainment of sustainable development. International cooperation is inextricably linked with sustainable development. States and non-state actors must further commit and fulfill the principles of global partnership as enshrined in goal 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals. Additionally, weaker states must make frantic and deliberate efforts to overcome their development challenges. They need to remove binding constraints by innovatively spurring economic growth that will avail needed resources for national development processes. Stronger states, for their part, must assist and support weaker states to overcome their growth challenges by ensuring that strong, effective, and inclusive institutions are built within the context of goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

It is plausible that stronger states can help weaker ones to progress towards sustainable development; however, there are failed states like Somalia, Ukraine, Palestine, and Syria whose conflict situations appear remote to present-day conflict resolution mechanisms as they continue to defile diplomatic efforts. Can such states overcome their long-standing crises to gain peace and stability? Will they have time to transition from crises and begin to progress towards sustainable development by 2030? Such questions remain unanswered; hence, the need for further research on how international cooperation should be pursued to end perennial conflicts across the globe to end conflicts. The UN system must be reinforced to achieve this objective and that all states and regional bodies must be made to pursue the achievement of sustainable development with the support of the UN Security Council.

The UNSC needs to be inclusive to meet this purposed. For instance, there is a need to include the African Union Commission on the UN Security Council (Kaydor, 2024) to ensure the inclusion of the world's second largest continent of about 1.4billion people on the Peacebuilding and security body of the UN.

To conclude, International cooperation is about the interactions amongst sovereign states and or regional bodies relative to how they strive to achieve common objectives when their preferences are neither identical due to lack of harmony. When countries interests are irreconcilable due to the presence of conflict of interest, diplomacy, and international cooperation can help provide the way forward.

Sustainable development is the development focused on socio-political, economic, and environmental conditions that satisfy the needs of current generations without compromising the interests of future generations. To achieve sustainable development, international cooperation should be the fulcrum. The connection between the 2 is very strong. Without cooperation amongst states, sustainable development might be achieved. Therefore, international cooperation should be the fulcrum on which sustainable development should take place as a desired global, regional, and national outcome.

References

1. Axrold, R., Keohane, O. (1985): Achieving cooperation under anarchy: strategies and institutions, in: World Politics 38 (1), 226–254.
2. Barrett, S. (2007): Why cooperate? the incentive to supply global public goods, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
3. Beisheim, M. / S. Campe / M. Schäferhoff (2010): Global governance through public-private partnerships, in Enderlein, H. / S. Wälti / M. Zürn (eds.): Handbook on multi-level governance, Edward Elgar Publishing, 370–382.
4. Boon E. (2009). International Cooperation for Sustainable Development in Africa, AREA STUDIES – AFRICA (Regional Sustainable Development Review) – Vol. I.
5. Büthe, T. & Mattli, W. (2011): The new global rulers: the privatization of regulation in the world economy, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
6. Chibba, M (2011). 'The Millennium Development Goals: key current issues and challenges', *Development Policy Review*, vol.29, no.1, pp. 75-90.
7. Collier, P 2007, The bottom billion: why the poorest countries are failing and what can be done about it, Oxford University Press, USA.
8. Creswell, J. (2009). Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed-Method, 3rd edition, Los Ang.
9. Easterly, W. (2005). 'Reliving the '50s: The big push, poverty traps, and takeoffs in economic development'. Working Papers no. 65, Center for Global Development.
10. Easterly, W. (2006). *The White Man's Burden: why the west's efforts to aid the rest have done so much ill and so little good*, New York: Penguin Books.
11. Easterly, W. (2009). 'The poor man's burden', Foreign Policy, Issue 170, pp.77-81.
12. Falkner, R. (2003): Private environmental governance and international relations: exploring the links, in: Global Environmental Politics 3 (2), 72–87.
13. Forman, S. and Segaar, D. (2006): New coalitions for global governance: the changing dynamics of multilateralism, in: Global Governance, Vol. 12, Issue 2, April, 205–225.
14. Griggs, D., M. Stafford-Smith, O. Gaffney, J. Rockström, M. C. Öhman, P. Shyamsundar, W. Steffen, G. Glaser, N. Kanie, and I. Noble. (2013). Sustainable development goals for people and planet. Nature 495(7441): 305–307. http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/495305a.
15. Grunberg, I., Stem, M. (1999): Defining global public goods, in: Kaul, I. / I. Grunberg / M. Stern (eds.): Global public goods: international

*Corresponding Author: **Prof. Dr. Thomas Kaydor, Jr.**

cooperation in the 21st century, New York: Oxford University Press.

16. Haddad, L. (2013): Development research: the shape of things to come, in: The Guardian 16 Aug. 2013; online: http://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2013/aug/16/develop ment-research-future-impact (accessed 10 Oct. 2013).
17. Hausmann, R. (2015). 'What Should we do About Inequality?' The Growth Lab, Harvard University; viewed 16 August 2020; https://growthlab.cid.harvard.edu/publications/what-should-we-do-about-inequality.
18. Haynes, J 2008, *Development studies: short introductions*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
19. Health Poverty Action (2014). *Honest Accounts? The true story of Africa's billion dollars loses*. London, UK, viewed 10 October 2020, <www.healthpovertyaction.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2014/07/Honest-Accounts-report-v4-web.pdf>.
20. Holzinger, K. (2008): Transnational common goods: strategic constellations, collective action problems, and multi-level provision, New York: Palgrave Macmillan
21. International Task Force on Global Public Goods (2006): Meeting global challenges: International cooperation in the national interest, Report of the International Task Force on Global Public Goods.
22. Kaydor, T. (2024). **Reconceptualizing Africa's Regional Integration for Peace and Sustainable Development: A Summary Analysis of PhD Dissertation;**https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.807139
23. Kaydor T. (2021). Cash Transfer: A Strategic Determinant for Poverty Reduction. In: Leal Filho
24. W., Azul A.M., Brandli L., Lange Salvia A., Özuyar P.G., Wall T. (eds) No Poverty. Encyclopedia of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69625-6_107-1.
25. Keijzer / Krätke / van Seters (2013): Meeting in the middle? Challenges and opportunities for EU cooperation with middle-income countries, Maastricht: ECDPM (Discussion Paper No. 140, February).
26. Keohane, R. O. (1984): After hegemony: cooperation and discord in the world political economy, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
27. Kindleberger, C. P. (1986): International public good without international government, in: American Economic Review 76 (1), 1–13
28. Kondoh, H, Kobayashi, T, Shiga, H, Sato, J. (2010). 'Diversity and Transformation of Aid Patterns in Asia's "Emerging Donors', Japan International Cooperation Agency Research Institute Research Institute, JICA-IR working paper no. 21, October.
29. Lancaster, C. (2007). Foreign Aid: Diplomacy, Development and Domestic Politics; The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, and London.
30. Leavy, P. (2017), Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed Methods, Arts-Based, and Community Based Participatory Research Approaches, The Gilford Press, New York.
31. Lim, M., Søgaard Jørgensen, P. and Wyborn, C. A. (2018). Reframing the sustainable development goals to achieve sustainable development in the Anthropocene—a systems approach. Ecology and Society 23(3):22. https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-10182-230322.
32. Moyo, D 2009, *Dead aid: why aid is not working and how there is a better way for Africa*, New York, USA.
33. Munoz, E. (2008). 'The Millennium Development Goals: facing down challenges', Briefing Paper, no. 2, Bread for the World Institute, Washington DC.
34. Mueller, M. (2010): Networks and states: the global politics of internet governance, Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press.
35. OECD (2013). *Aid to developing countries rebounds in 2013 to reach an all-time high*, Organization of Economic Cooperation for Development, viewed 20 January 2021, <www.oecd.org/newsroom/aid-to-developing-countries-rebounds-in-2013-to-reach-an-all-time-high.htm>.
36. Pattberg, P. (2007): Private institutions and global governance: the new politics of environmental sustainability, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
37. Paulo, S. (2014), International Cooperation and Development: A Conceptual Overview, Discussion Paper / German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE), Bonn, Germany.
38. Poku, Nana & Whitman, Jim. (2011). 'The Millennium Development Goals: challenges, prospects & opportunities', *Third World Quarterly*, vol.32, no.1, pp 3-8.
39. Raustiala, K. (2002): The architecture of international cooperation: transgovernmental networks and the future of international law, in: Virginia Journal of International Law 43 (1), 1–92.
40. Reinicke, W.H. / F. Deng (2000): Critic0al choices: the United Nations, networks, and the future of global governance, Ottawa: IDRC.
41. Riddell, R. (2014). 'Does foreign aid really work?', Keynote address to the Australian Aid and International Development Workshop, 13 February, Australian National University, Canberra.
42. Sachs, J 2005, *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time*, The Penguin Press, NY.
43. Schäferhoff, M. / S. Campe / C. Kaan (2009): Transnational public-private partnerships in international relations: making sense of concepts, research frameworks, and results, in: International

*Corresponding Author: **Prof. Dr. Thomas Kaydor, Jr.**

Studies Review, Vol. 11, Issue 3, September, 451–474.

44. Slaughter, A.-M. (2004): A new world order, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
45. Slaughter, A.M. and Zaring (2007): Networking goes international: An update, in: Annual Review of Law and Social Sciences 2, 211–229.
46. Stewart, F. (2006). 'Basic needs', in D. Clark (ed), *The Elgar Companion to Development Studies*, Cheltenham, UK.
47. Sustainable Development Goals (2016). United Nations Council for Economic and Social Affairs, https://sdgs.un.org/goals; viewed 2 February 2021.
48. Thomas, C, Reader, M. (2001). 'Development and inequality', in B. White, R. Little and M. Smith (eds), *Issues in World Politics*, Basingstoke, Palgrave, pp.74-92.
49. Todaro, M.P, Smith, C.S. (2015). Economic Development, 12th Edition, United States of America.
50. United Nations (2016). *High-Level Panel on Post 2015 Development Agenda*, United Nations, viewed 22 January 2021, <http://www.post2015hlp.org/>.
51. Williamson, J. (2005). 'The Washington Consensus as policy prescription for development', Chapter 3 in Besley, T, and Zagha, R., Development Challenges in the 1990s: leading policymakers speak from experience, World Bank and Oxford University Press.
52. Xinhua Global Times (2013). *China-Africa economic and trade cooperation*, Information office Of the State Council, People's Republic of China, viewed 26 January 2021, <www.safpi.org/sites/default/files/publications/China-AfricaEconomicandTradeCooperation.pdf>.

*Corresponding Author: **Prof. Dr. Thomas Kaydor, Jr.**