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The Retardation of Agriculture, Development and Sustainability in South Africa: Land Reform Perils and Government Ineptitude

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Abstract: *The paper attempts to place in context the vexing issue of the 1913 Land Act of South Africa. The significance of the paper is steeped within the emotional issue of land reform, its slowness in respect of implementation by the democratic government, given the fact that 2013 is the one hundred year anniversary of this draconian piece of legislation that was put into place by South Africa's colonial masters Great Britain and, by the apartheid government that came into power in 1948. The paper further argues that in the absence of land restitution and redistribution of land, agriculture, development and sustainability will be a utopian ideal and, will thus maintain the status quo that was engineered by the apartheid government. In other words it is a century of stolen dreams and therefore a clarion call to accelerate restitution. It attempts to outline the radical steps that are needed to right the 1913 wrong. The paper also attempts briefly to place on record some salient issues that have hampered development under apartheid and continues to be hampered under the democratic African National Congress government twenty years down the road and into democracy.*

Introduction

Land reform is more about being able to make a living than simply acquiring and grabbing property (Forde, 2013: 24). Marking the 1913 Natives Land Act is not a throwback to a dark era but a stark reminder of the trouble times in which millions of Africans continue to live in South Africa. According to Ruth Hall (2013 in Forde) this is a significant centenary, but not a hopeful one, as the country watches rural South Africans begin to take matters into their own hands and engage in a form of struggle that drives rural people and the government further apart.” Rural social movements, labour unions, small – scale farmers’ organizations and urban landless groups have recently taken stock of the state of play in South Africa, more vociferously and aggressively and have now begun to develop and implement their own strategies. There is no doubt given this scenario that they are frustrated by years of trying to work with the state and within the framework set out by the so – called democratic government led by the ruling party, the African National Congress. In other words these important constituencies are technically saying they do not trust the state and that the government is not listening. “To mark the century – old act, once referred to as apartheid’s ‘original sin’ various events were held around the country” (Forde, 2013: 24), and President Zuma at one of the functions clearly conceded that “his government could not fulfill its pledge on the transfer of land and admitted only 6.7 million hectares had been transferred through redistribution and restitution since 1994” (Zuma in Forde, 2013: 24).

Accelerating the process is no longer enough because the process is wrong. Key to the people’s grievances is the view that they are being expected to conform to government-imposed views of accessible land usage and farming practices. The government is focused on commercial farmers and pursuing a narrow agenda. This is the core of the problem and until the government wakes up to this there will always be two groups at loggerheads. What the so – called masses are requesting and asking for is neither complex nor farfetched; it is simply modest requests of access to municipal commonage around towns and to support services for small farmers in rural areas.

“If one breaks down their demands and examine them closely, they are more modest than the commercial farming models the government supports and more in keeping with early policies of the first ANC – led government. The land access policies of the Reconstruction and Development Programme of Nelson Mandela’s government focused exclusively on the poor. There was a

means test that catered for those earning less than R1500 a month. That was lifted by Thabo Mbeki's government in 2000 when the programme and policies began to focus on emerging commercial farmers, away from group projects to individuals on commercial farms. South Africa is not alone in this process. Brazil has two different land reform processes" (Hall, 2013; Forde, 2013:24). One is more market – based land reform that benefits the commercial farmer, while parallel reform involves peasant movements staging occupations where private and state – owned land is not used. According to Forde (2013: 24) the "Brazilian experience shows that peasants are drawing on a clause in their constitution that allows them to occupy unused land for their own benefit for five years, as long as they don't employ others on that land to achieve their goal."

This is essentially a declaration inching towards and through the words 'land occupation' that conjures a Zimbabwean – style land grab, the budding peasant movement in South Africa is trying to develop something more productive, along the lines of what is under way in Brazil, in the absence of delivery from the government. A platform is required in order to bring all stakeholders together, that will allow small farmers, landless or homeless people to identify and request strategic unused land, for purposes of eking a living. It is therefore obvious that land reform is more about being able to make a living than simply grabbing property. This would ease social tensions. Thus, there would be no need for government to buy whole farms. The issue goes beyond land to the heart of a crisis of livelihood, of which land reform or access is but one component. The other issues of cardinal importance are development and sustainability. Given the state of play currently not much has been achieved in this regard over the last twenty years of democracy. In other words it requires a more thorough understanding of the 1913 Natives' Land Act, which according to Hall (In Forde, 2013) as having created slave labour.

One does not require Solomon's wisdom to understand in South Africa that the mining sector was taking off a hundred years ago and there was an enormous demand for cheap labour, but that was threatened by the independent farming production of the African peasantry. It is therefore not hard to see as to why land related movements in South Africa are gathering momentum around the country and are now flagging a crisis that deserves serious attention. It therefore becomes imperative to understand the historic land reform processes that permeated this vexing issue in different parts of the world over time. This will also allow the reader to place in context the fundamental issues and debates that straddle the issues of land reform. This will further allow the reader to place in context the land reform processes in South Africa, from the all embracing perspective of erasing apartheid's legacy.

Historic Analysis of the Land Reform Debates

Some professionals and politicians in South Africa and many other developing – countries believe that reform is a critical component of any overall policy to increase food production and increased rural welfare. Critics challenge this position. Some express philosophical opposition to state intervention against private property; others question the efficiency and cost effectiveness of reforms; others maintain that the basic problem lies, not in tenure relations but in cheap food policies and, of course, the lack of political will. Those who support agrarian reform have two basic sets of arguments. One set derives from neo – classical economics. Peasant producers make better use of land, labour and capital than landlords; productive resources should, therefore, be redistributed to peasants. The other set of arguments derives from a pre – occupation with the feudal or anachronistic organization of estates.

Estate land must be redistributed to eliminate “extra economic coercion,” to increase productivity and to improve the standard of living of workers. (This case exemplifies an example, of but one variable of the exploitation of farm workers in the Western Cape that brought agriculture to a standstill in November / December 2012. Is it a case and example of government and the farm owner exploiting the worker?). These two positions are critically reviewed in Lehman” (1978: 339 – 45). “The second position, usually labeled ‘structuralist,’ has been dominant since World War II. Structuralists argue that governments must initiate land reform to increase agricultural production, improve the productivity of labour and decrease rural poverty.” This is precisely what government and agricultural institutions, policy and decision – makers should have adhered to and striven to achieve within the agricultural dynamics of the former South African homelands. “Major proponents of this school include, Barraclough (1973) for Latin America, Warriner (1962) for the Middle East, and Jacobs (1961) for Southeast Asia. The significant influence of these writers and proponents of land reform has been felt in national and international programmes, and by governments that have been supportive of agrarian reform in many countries” (Parsons, 1973: 106). It would be wise for the South African agricultural sector and the government to look at these recommendations for purposes of land reform and development in the country, given the magnitude of the issue and the sensitive and volatile political debates taking place in respect of policy issues within the ruling African National Congress government and opposition parties currently.

Structuralists defend agrarian reform as the critical component in an overall programme to change the organization of agricultural production so that both productivity and welfare are enhanced. They emphasize the redistribution of land, the designation of land beneficiaries, the establishment of group farms and an infrastructure to assist the reform sector. Future attempts at agrarian reform must give more thought than has been the case in the past to the production of basic food, the possibilities for complementary production in the reformed and private sectors, and the development of welfare and employment generating programmes benefiting those sectors of the rural population that will not benefit directly from agrarian reform. During the past decade it has become clear that merely to increase food production is an insufficient goal for agriculture and rural development policy in less developed countries. In order that the majority of rural people – small and marginal cultivators, tenants and landless workers – can also participate in the benefits of rural development, policies and programmes must focus directly on increasing their productivity, incomes and employment opportunities. “For any approach to agricultural development that incorporates the majority of the rural people, not merely the minority comprising large scale farmers, one must identify four necessary components. Esman and Uphoff (1982:46) identify these as follows:

- A set of government policies that stimulate higher productivity and greater income – earning opportunities. In addition to fair prices for agricultural commodities, they include tariff and credit measures to discourage premature mechanization, which displaces agricultural labourers for whom there are no alternative job opportunities.
- Government investments and expenditure on physical and social infrastructure that enhance productivity and rural welfare. These infrastructural facilities must include roads, irrigation and drainage works, research and training centres, schools and sanitary water supply.
- Technologies, such as higher yielding varieties and improved cropping and husbandry practices, that are suitable to the specific needs of small farmers in their distinctive micro – environments and that they can afford to adopt.

- Organizations to guide group action in the pursuit of common goals.

The above criteria and principals to a very large extent had eluded the South African homelands over the periods of their so – called independence, and continue to elude the so – called democratic South African government, led by the African National Congress, after nearly twenty years of freedom. This is a tacit example of failure by the democratic government and is an indictment to its revolutionary struggle waged against apartheid. “Policies were stifled given the fact that during this period of their emergence and development, (the homelands) there were constant changes in management echelons of agricultural departments, coupled with numerous and constant administrative and structural changes, which did not enhance the direction and focus of agriculture, nor address the plight and problems of the rural agricultural sector of the homelands” (Personal discussion, 1993, Secretary for Agriculture). This is no different in democratic South Africa today under the so – called democratic government led by the African National Congress and, the continuous appointments of inept and ‘unschooled’ agricultural ministers and, in the main technically, a clueless agricultural bureaucracy both at national and provincial levels of government.

There is compelling evidence that agricultural development strategies designed to increase the productivity, welfare and employment opportunities of small farmers, tenants and landless workers require far more attention than the subject has received to date. Institutions need to be built and strengthened at the local level to develop more effective local action capacities, aggressive educational and training programmes instituted for local people and citizens at large. Without such institutional development at the grassroots level, no policies, technologies or infrastructure can be effectively implemented and is, inadequate and sorely lacking in democratic South Africa, as was the case within the former homelands. Institutional development at the local level must, therefore, involve both government and local membership associations and must emphasize the links between them. This is the vital organizational dimension of agricultural and rural development that needs recognition by the national government and the nine provincial governments of South Africa.

Simultaneously, from a management and agricultural business dynamic, government must ensure proper human resource capabilities. In addition it must incorporate adequate and meaningful training programmes in respect of finance, accounting and a host of other pertinent human resources development issues. Further, it must consolidate and provide sound extension programmes with particular reference to subsistence farming in the rural periphery of the country. The rural periphery has in the main been left to its own devices to develop on its own, much to the detriment of the country, in terms of economic development, human sustainability, subsistence farming and the production of food. The necessity of the production of basic food by the poor, the vulnerable and marginalized communities is essential for purposes of their survival, sustained health but above all for purposes of restoration of their human dignity. This has been exacerbated post 1994 by a collapse and the virtual non existence of agricultural extension services within the provinces. In other words, without effective and accountable extension service, no meaningful land reform initiatives can be engineered nor scientifically implemented in respect to the empowerment of those historically marginalized by apartheid. In this regard, it appears that the democratic government is maintaining the historic divide and brutal status quo, because it suits its economic and political agenda to keep the vulnerable and the poor in bondage by doling out meager amounts of money through its grants system. On the other hand, while it achieves and consolidates the status quo of marginalization of the poor and rural communities, it is busy selling out to the capitalist classes and the predatory black elite, who continue to amass vulgar

wealth at the expense of the black majority population that have been condemned to poverty and increasing inequality and, with very little hope of any meaningful employment opportunities. Basically the poor live from hand to mouth, day after day. This impedes educational opportunities and stymies cognitive development of children relegated to extreme and absolute poverty, by an uncaring and brutal system under so – called democracy.

After a long period of neglect and decay in both the pre – and post – independent periods of the former South African homelands including democratic South Africa, post 1994, there has been no encouraging evidence that the governments of the nine provinces and the central government and their development assistance agencies are starting to invest in or for that matter recognize the organizational dimensions of rural development. This appears to be the stark reality even today in democratic South Africa, after nearly twenty years of freedom and independence from apartheid South Africa. The performance of agricultural departments in the former homelands and other government agencies at that time serving rural people could have been improved by the total integration of agencies financed by the different governments (with respect to the homeland governments). This could have led to limiting the growing bureaucracies, streamlining agricultural sectors by means of avoiding the duplication of services, which were very costly and had not made any economic sense. It is a question of emphasizing quality education, skills and leadership. This is a salutary warning to the present government of the day in South Africa and, it is an imperative that must be pursued by the democratic government in terms of agricultural policy in the years that lie ahead. The discussion undertaken above sets the pace to now project upon some agrarian and land reform issues that need understanding in the drive of unfolding agricultural management perspectives within the policy imperatives of the agricultural sectors of emerging democratic South Africa.

The issues outlined above are not all encompassing but nevertheless is a good starting point, and relevant to agrarian and land reform, not only for South African agricultural and rural development, but pertinent to a large part of Southern Africa and to general development and for emerging market economies. They are also pertinent to government policy and private sector imperatives, in order to deal with and address poverty, unemployment and inequality within developing countries. Many developing countries have increased food production greatly, but a large segment has been bypassed. The equitable distribution of gains from the green revolution increases the productivity of large numbers of poor farmers and is one of the most critical issues facing many of the developing nations (Lipton and Longhurst, 1989: 12). This will require far reaching political, social, institutional and organizational changes within the Agricultural sector of South and Southern Africa. A policy issue that confronts governments is the level of resources to allocate to more modern agricultural sectors, in order to produce more food and as rapidly as possible, in order to meet the demands of their rapidly growing urban sectors versus how much to allocate to raise the production of large numbers of the rural populations above the subsistence levels of farming or production.

Although research has shown that small farmers are often more productive as they are more labour intensive, it is widely acknowledged that the basic thrust of agricultural development efforts over the last several decades has led to few benefits to small – holders and the rural poor (Chambers, 1983; Johnstone and Clarke, 1982; de Janvry, 1981). “It has also been generally accepted that the relative position of small – holder peasants has deteriorated especially in recent years as redistributionist policies have been abandoned in favour of increased production” (Grindle, 1985: 12). Was the disappointing record of agricultural development on behalf of small farmers in the former Bophuthatswana and the other Bantustan homelands inherently the case or largely the

product of poorly designed development programmes? “An initial consideration is that rural and agrarian structures differ greatly across and within the major so – called developing regions” (Hyden, 1986; Lipton and Longhurst, 1985), so that making generalizations is particularly hazardous.

Although hunger is not a simple matter, colonial legacies, unwise authoritarian policies, the lack of appropriate agricultural technology, unequal or dualistic agrarian structures, population growth, and many other factors render solutions to the agricultural problems of South Africa and the region very difficult. “Nonetheless, there are only a few countries that have the labour absorption capacity to employ agricultural and rural people uprooted through technological and political change, making retention of small farmers an important goal for the near future” (Buttel and Reynolds, 1989: 350). These realities must bear heavily on the selection of future research priorities in South and Southern Africa and indeed for most developing nations. What strategies are then appropriate? Discussion on the factors limiting agricultural production and retardation and the techniques appropriate to overcome South Africa’s and the region’s stagnation, must become a priority of the agricultural agenda of the new democratic government and its policy makers. “Linking scientist and farmer, rethinking extension’s role by proposing the use of a system’s perspective in the analysis, design and operation of agricultural extension programmes to assure coherence and efficiency of effort, are vital factors in rural development” (Drosdoff, 1984: 4).

Land and the Need for Speed in Reform

Leading from the above, it is obvious that the land reform issue in South Africa is a timely reminder of the damage apartheid and its policies inflicted on the citizens of South Africa. It is therefore imperative that the democratically elected South African government, led by the ANC must repair the damage by returning land to its rightful owners. It is almost twenty years since the first step was taken to address the land issue. However, there is no doubt that the lack of overwhelming success of the land restitution programme remains a major cause of concern. It is an emotional issue, but the government has acknowledged its policy of willing buyer, willing seller has not worked. It has also accepted that the last campaign to register claims was not exhaustive. The government has therefore to act with speed to address the land question. If left unattended, could lead to social unrest and its attendant problems. We need to look at the situation in countries such as Zimbabwe to see what happens if the damage left by apartheid is not addressed speedily. There are already signs of impatience emerging from some parts of the nation. There are worrying threats to occupy land. This must be a warning to the government of South Africa, a wake – up call to act on the issue with the requisite efficiency.

Land Dispossession – An Historical Understanding

The big land question, the issues of agrarian reform, the magnitude of the development problem coupled with the fundamental issues that permeate sustainability requires a basic understanding of land dispossession in South Africa. This is articulated as follows and as captured and outlined in the City Press (2013: 30):

- 1659: The first Khoikhoi – Dutch war breaks out over the loss of grazing land by Khoikhoi in 1658. The war ends and a peace agreement are concluded. The Dutch tell the Khoikhoi; “you people have now, once and for all, lost the land around the Cape through war and you must accordingly never dwell on the idea of getting back through peace or through war (South African History Online).

- 1739: The so – called Bushman War breaks out and free burgher commandos seize the best land south of Namaqualand and west of the Doorn River. This encourages further settlements in the Hantam and Roggeveld areas.
- 1814: Cape Governor Sir John Cradock changes the system of land tenure from leasehold to freehold for white farmers. Prior to this farmers’ paid little for land, nor made major developments, as they recognized they did not own the land. This measure is introduced to allow for a denser population of white people on the eastern border to act as a buffer against black people.
- 1837: The Voortrekkers, under the leadership of Hendrik Potgeiter defeat the Ndebele under Mzlikazi at the Marico River and seize vast tracts of land between Limpopo and Vaal Rivers.
- 1838: On May 16, The Voortrekkers, led by Andries Pretorius, fight and defeat the Zulus at the banks of the Ncome River (in the battle of Blood River) and dispossesses them of their land. Subsequently, they establish the Republic of Natalia.
- 1846: A land commission is appointed to demarcate locations for Africans in Natal. The commission recommends that seven large “locations” be set apart for the settlement of black people. As a consequence, Theophilus Shepstone, the commissioner of native affairs, moves an estimated 80 000 African people to these different parts of the country.
- 1847: The British colonial administration displaces the Khoikhoi clans from their land to increase grazing for sheep. These results in raids of settler farmers stock by the Korana, San and Xam groups, whose way of life was disrupted.
- 1853: In November, a resolution taken by the Volksraad enables district commanders to grant land for occupation by Africans on condition of “good behaviour.” But under the resolution there is no individual title. Africans have to use land communally, and chiefs are regarded as trustees of tribes. Ultimate power over the land still remains with the white government.
- 1866: The Voortrekkers go to war with the Basotho in order to seize the fertile Caledon valley and defeat the Basotho. They force them to ‘sign’ the Treaty of Thaba Bosiu, under which the Basotho lose all their land north of the Caledon River and a large area in the northwest.
- 1882 – 3: White farmers lay siege to the Ndzundza Ndebele people for nine months. When faced with starvation, they surrender. Their fertile lands are seized and divided among the Voortrekkers. Each war participant is given five families to use as servants, who work for little or no pay on farms.
- 1913: The 1913 Natives Land Act bars all Africans from owning large tracts of land in South Africa. The act becomes law on June 19, limiting African land ownership to 7 percent, which later increases to 13 percent through the 1936 Native Trust and Land Act of South Africa. The act restricts black people from buying or occupying land except as employees of a white master. But it gives white people ownership of 87 percent of land and leaves black people to scramble for the rest. Sol Plaatje wrote “Awakening on Friday morning, June 20 1913, the South African Native found himself, not actually a slave, but a pariah in the land of his birth.”
- 1934: The newly passed Slum Clearance Act enables municipalities to forcibly remove people settled in areas considered to be slums. Consequently, the Cape Town

city council demolishes slum buildings in District Six and builds a thousand new homes for coloured people only.

- 1937: The Native Laws Amendment Act is passed. It prohibits the buying of land by Africans from whites in urban areas, except by permission from government. Under the act, authorities in urban areas are to keep a record of all Africans living in designated areas.”

Thus exclusion of blacks was perfected by the processes outlined above. Black African dignity and humanity was completely eroded by the British and by apartheid. The Natives Land Act was thus perfected and, it is 100 years in 2013 that, the Land Act came into being as one of the most cruel and draconian pieces of colonial and apartheid legislation, to confront the majority in their land of birth. The process of its promulgation was an infamous moment in South African history and its many unwanted legacies remain. It therefore becomes imperative to understand the Land Act from the issue of change that is urgently required.

A Century of Stolen Dreams

Any analysis of the 1913 Land Act must be geared in an understanding of reversing the structural inequalities produced by the Land Act, and must involve far more than land redistribution alone (Hall, 2013: 30). Land dispossession far preceded the act and goes back at least several centuries. Though the act (renamed the Black Land Act) was repealed in 1991, along with the Group Areas Act and other land laws and the Bantustan governments dismantled, the imprints of this profoundly unjust set of laws are still everywhere to be seen. It is our opinion that there are four legacies that South Africa has to contend with today:

- The material legacy of rural poverty and inequality, which affects about 16 million people or more, a third of South Africa’s population. On the other side are a thriving white commercial agricultural sector; cheap farm labour, historic subsidies to capitalist means of production; price controls and historic trade protection. In reality the Bantustan system remains intact in 2013 and is a feature of democratic South Africa. This situation is an indictment to the democratically led African National Congress government.

- Second is a displaced legacy of urban poverty and inequality. South Africans in general have all been affected by this draconian piece of legislation and, we clearly see it in the first quarter of the 21st century and in 20 years of democracy. It’s not simple, but there has to be a finite understanding and decisive intervention by the government of reversing the legacies of apartheid. The legacy of the Land Act itself has to be displaced.

- It contributed to the erasure of histories, the braking of communities. It contributed to the splitting of families. The beneficiaries themselves, the white capitalist class and corporate owners who obtained land cheaply and developed the land through public subsidies and cheap labour – do they have any responsibilities in the restitution process?

- Lastly, it is a political legacy of dual systems of governance and authority.

These are some of the vexing issues that need to be addressed and nuanced. There is still a long road to travel in order to reverse the legacy the act created. This reversal will be one of struggle.

What are the Consequences of the Land Act

Overcoming the legacy of the Natives Land Act (Act No 27 of 1913) is the story of incremental progress in the face of a monumental injustice and a lasting effect that refuses to fade away. Repealed in 1991, the Natives Land Act had been the first fundamental piece of race – discriminating legislation, established three years after the formation of the union. It was the basis on

which the apartheid regime based its policy of separate development. Its fundamental construction was as follows:

- Placed restrictions by means of race to buy or own land;
- Outlawed rental tenancy and black sharecroppers;
- Recruited labour from the reserves;
- Created a generation of migrant workers, which is still present today;
- A native was defined as any person, male or female, who is a member of an aboriginal race or tribe of Africa – effectively, anyone who was not white.
- By preventing white South Africans, the act aimed to ensure the territorial segmentation of the races from buying land in the reserves.
- Decisions always favoured the white population by virtue of the Beaumont Commission and decisions were made without consultation.
- Sir William Beaumont completed the work of the commission and the act was complemented in 1936 by the Native Trust and Land Act, which saw it amended to facilitate the ultimate transfer of 6.2 million hectares of land to the reserves, which then made up 13.5 percent for black use.

What were the Consequences?

The effect of the above was colossal. Between 1960 and 1983 alone, it was estimated that some 3.5 million people were forcibly removed through the act and its supporting legislation. Others have put this figure at 7.5 million (Van Onselen, 2013: 18). This did not manage fully to achieve its ultimate objective, although modernity and mechanization hastened the decline of black tenants, many endured. Farming is a mutual relationship between owner and worker and, although grossly exploited, even the grand apartheid design could never achieve complete segregation as landowners took advantage of a seemingly endless supply of cheap labour. Onselen (2013: 18) states that “when democracy was born in South Africa in 1994, it faced a problem so entrenched and so inextricably hard – wired into the structure of the economy that overcoming it must have appeared an almost insurmountable challenge, and therefore remains partially addressed. By 1966, about 60 000 white commercial farmers, about one percent of the population, owned just less than 90 percent of the land classified as agricultural. Between 1948 and 1998, a legal process was implemented whereby claimants were able to submit a claim to have that land restored to them. Of the about 80 000 who applied, the majority settled for cash as compensation, rather than the land. The process was marred by protracted legal and administrative difficulties.” The original target was to redistribute about 30 percent of this land by 1999, but by 2012, of the 24.6 million hectares identified for this purpose, just 8 million had been transferred. The target of 30 percent has since been delayed to 2014. Of those who did opt for the land, most were not provided with the necessary skills and training and thus a number of once viable farms have lapsed into disrepair, a cause for serious economic concern.

New legislation, bills on expropriation, restitution and property evaluation aims to reopen the claims process and has met with strong opposition, given that some 90 percent of previous land – reform projects failed and thus needed to be recapitalized. Van Onselen points out that “it is estimated that about R30 billion has been spent on land reform without a significant change in land ownership patterns and further points out that, there is thus a renewed emphasis on post – settlement support in the form of training and development.”

A final fundamental problem underpins much of this. Only in February this year did the minister of rural development and land reform say that a full audit of state – owned land had been

completed, although it has yet to be made public. The minister stated that 22 percent of the land, some 26 million hectares was state owned and 78 percent or 96 million hectares privately owned. A significant portion of this state – owned land is potentially economically viable and its redistribution would negate much of the administrative complexity involved in the transfer of private land.

Conclusion

Currently and as things stand, only 10 percent of the original redistribution target of 30 percent has been successfully transferred to the rightful owners by the democratic government. In this sense and for all intents and purposes, the 1913 Natives Land Act remains very much alive in South Africa, after 100 years of exploitation of the black majority, the rightful owners of the land, by South Africa's British colonial masters and the former apartheid state. This status quo is being maintained twenty years down the road into democracy by the so – called democratically elected government led by the ANC and, is an indictment to its revolutionary credentials in respect to the heroic revolutionary struggle it waged for emancipation of the oppressed masses of predominantly black South Africa. The second part of the paper will attempt to discuss some of the radical steps required to right the wrongs of the 1913 Land Act. Amidst this, a host of important and salient land issues will be raised in the second article of the two part series.

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The Persistent Question of Access in South African Higher Education: Need to Traverse New Virtual Terrains

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Abstract: *The Higher Education (HE) sector in South Africa has been in a state of crisis for some time, especially in terms of finance and access. In response to the South African Department of Higher Education and Training's (DHET) Draft Policy Framework for the Provision of Distance Education in South African Universities (2011), the major thrust of this submission concentrates on the crises of access to HE and how an innovative solution is in the offing through a Public Private Partnership (PPP) in distance education.*

Introduction

Globally, public Higher Education (HE) is in the throes of major fiscal crises (Williams, 2011; Douglass 2010; Mugimu, 2009; Thaver, 2008; Genevois, 2008). In this respect, South African Higher Education is no exception (Badat, 2010). Although the budget for overall education in South Africa has progressively improved, the critical challenges of equity and access have been lagging. The process of globalisation and the new era of the Knowledge Society, together with the recent global financial crisis have further exacerbated the predicament. In order to respond to these exigencies, the South African Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) through the auspices of the Council for Higher Education (CHE) introduced various policies and financial strategies to address the issue (CHE, 2004). Despite these financial and infrastructural investments, the number of matriculants seeking entry into post-secondary institutions has increased, substantially, and the twin concerns of equity and access have been seriously compromised. In response to this resilient dilemma, the DHET in 2011 published a Draft Policy Framework for the Provision of Distance Education in South African Universities as a strategic measure to confront the problematique.

The main argument of the DHET's draft framework document is that access to higher education has become a major challenge for the country. In particular, the document speaks to critical issues such as finance, the tyranny of distance and work commitments that confront and weigh against the majority of potential post-secondary learners. The Ministry then makes a compelling case for use of distance education as a means of resolving the serious crises of access to higher education. The solution tendered is underscored by expected needs or measurements of quality, cost-effectiveness and efficiency. The mid-section of the document expresses the view that the dynamic development in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) could be decisively exploited in providing innovative solutions for questions of access, specifically, through the expansion of new modes of learning. The latter part of the document then goes on to discuss infrastructural needs and cost of setting up technology and computer support centres. A copy of the full document is available at the South African DHET's website.

At the outset we would like to state that it is not the intention of this paper to deal with the merits or demerits of distance learning. However, it is against the broad canvas of the challenges of public HE, in general, and the questions of finance and access, in particular, that the writers argue for an Innovative solution to an 'irksome problem'. It is posited that the time is ripe to explore the positive dynamics of the Development State of South Africa to shape and cultivate a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) for the successful delivery of distance education in the HE sector. Furthermore, we believe that the time to "traverse new virtual landscapes" in terms of a solu-

tion to the HE crisis is an imperative that cannot be ignored. The crisis of access and finance is not unique to the South African HE sector and an innovative solution to the vexing problem is in the offing through a PPP. Patrinos *et al* (2009) and Salerno (2004) aver that the construct of a PPP to address problems and challenges of HE is not new and has been used extensively in both developed and emerging economies of the world.

Higher Education: A Scan of Global Trends, Problems and Challenges

There has always been some degree of consensus regarding the catalytic role of HE in any nation's economic, political and social development (Castells, 1991). The process of globalisation, however, has engendered an irrevocable change leading to a major transformation in technologies, which in turn, have facilitated the birth of a Knowledge Society. Knowledge, thus becomes an indispensable determinate that influences the success of individuals and has a national and international impact on the overall development of a country (Cloete *et al*, 2005; Santiago *et al*, 2008).

Education, until recently has always been regarded as prerogative of the state (UNESCO, 2008:5). Despite the fact that governments throughout the world have acknowledged the intrinsic value of HE for economic growth and overall development, the sector has been immersed in a financial crisis. The emergence of new problems and challenges, both locally and globally, has put undue pressure on the financial budgets of states. Mona Sam (2009) of the Institute for Development Policy and Management at the University of Manchester, for example, is of the view that "Increasing fiscal pressure combined with increasing demand for higher education and the significant private benefits that it accrues to an individual has shifted focus to alternate ways of funding higher education".

Likewise, in Africa, as well as in other emerging economies, the HE sector is also under severe pressure. Governments under chronic financial strain are simply unable to meet the demands of access and the provisioning of HE. With increasing competition of scarce financial resources and access, the gap in funding public services has been escalating at a dramatic rate, and this has driven governments to seriously reconsider their positions, *vis-a-vis* HE service delivery (Thaver, 2008). Consequently, it has forced governments to look at alternate models for funding HE. The World Bank, similarly, makes comparable observations about the dilemmas of public HE in emerging economies and goes on to suggest that the sector needs to reinvent itself (Patrinos *et al.*, 2009). In this respect, it recommends that the public sector does not only need to continue its role as a provider of HE, but also to make access an important priority of its HE agenda. Perhaps, more importantly, the World Bank endorses the thesis that "...public and private sectors can join together to complement each other's strengths in providing education services and helping developing countries to meet the Millennium Development Goals for education." The concept of PPPs, the Bank further contends, recognises the existence of alternative options for the provision of HE (Patrinos *et al.*, 2009).

In South Africa, as well, the pressures of globalisation, together with the skills needs of the new Knowledge Society have impacted heavily on the HE landscape. The phenomenal increase in the demand for equity and access to tertiary education, however, has saddled the post-Apartheid HE system with supplementary major challenges, such as, the questions of massification, gross inequalities, resources, diversity and quality. This is especially true in terms of the tension between implementing changes that need both time and considerable resources to work their way through, and the inextricable problems and challenges that need to be addressed, in tandem (Badat, 2010; Cloete and Moja, 2005).

Finally, it is quite obvious from the cursory analysis above that the critical role of HE, with specific reference to a country's development trajectory cannot be over-emphasized. Globally, HE has been financed primarily by the government. In recent times, moreover, due to various problems and challenges facing the sector, especially, issues of access and financial viability, such a strategy is not sustainable. Ibara (2011:1) opines that as a result of this situation, a new nexus of relationships has begun emerging: the dramatic expansion of the system; the need to maintain an equitable access to higher education; and the issue of inadequate funding. The inextricable relationship between these emerging issues, not only demands a new approach to our critical understanding of the complexity, but also, cajoles us to explore new and innovative solutions to address the problematique of financial sustainability within the HE sector. In this context, the need for PPPs becomes crucial.

Unpacking the Concept of a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) in Education

From the preceding examination of trends in HE, it becomes evident that the private sector is gravitating towards being an almost indispensable partner in the provision of education, globally. The approaches to the PPP, however, vary considerably. According to Educational International (2009:14), the term PPP "is a sort of 'umbrella notion' covering a broad range of agreements between public institutions and the private sector, aimed at operating public infrastructures or delivering public services". Perhaps more importantly, the conceptual model of a public-private partnership (PPP) recognizes the existence of alternative options for providing education services.

Given the exigencies of public HE, this section will outline a few conceptual models of PPPs which we believe are appropriate for the South African scenario. Fundamentally, these are PPPs which are premised on the principal that the state will guide the policy and provide the necessary funding for the private sector to deliver a specific educational service (Douglass, 2010; OECD, 2008; OECD, 2007; Centre for European Studies, 2006; World Bank, 2003). These PPP models are nuance by an agreement in which the private sector delivers a specified educational service of a predetermined quantity and quality at an agreed price for a specific period of time. Furthermore, these contracts contain rewards, and sanctions for non-performance and include circumstances in which the private sector shares the financial risk in the delivery of educational services. Indeed, there are several models of this nature. The World Bank has identified five such types of contracts. See Table 1, below (Patrinos, 2006).

Table 1: A Typology of Public Private Partnerships in Education

	What government contracts for	Definition	Contract types
1	Management, professional services (input)	Government buys school management services or auxiliary and professional service	Management contracts Professional services e.g. curriculum design)
2	Operational services(process)	Government buys school operation services	Operational contracts
3	Education services (output)	Government buys student places in private schools (contracts with school to enroll specific students)	Contract for education of specific students
4	Facility availability (input)	Government buys facility availability	Provision of infrastructure services contracts
5	Facility availability and education services (input and output bundle)	Government buys facility availability combined with services (operational or outputs)	Provision of infrastructure contracts with education services contracts

Source: Patrinos, World Bank (2006)

It is option 3 in Table 1, which we believe has the greatest potential and relevance for a PPP in the South African HE sector. It is similar to the ‘voucher’ or ‘charter’ system, which is now deployed globally, in both developed and developing economies. In this option, the state literally buys a place for a student and then compensates the private education provider with a “subsidy”. This subvention is equivalent to the financial value it apportions to state HE institutions for every student they enroll. In this circumstance, the state absolves its responsibility of physical and social infrastructural provisioning and passes that liability onto the private HE provider, thus lessening its financial burden and increasing access to HE – a goal which is achievable through the patronage of a PPP and which the DHET sincerely aspires to in its draft policy document.

On the other hand, debates about the economics and quality of education provided by private HE also abound. They are tenuous, to say the least (Salerno, 2004). Globally, the issue regarding the economics of a PPP is a matter of arithmetic and logistics and could easily be resolved, with the mutual interests of all stakeholders in mind. The question regarding quality, conversely, is debatable. In this respect, and at the risk of over-simplification, we would like to submit that in the case of South Africa, the CHE accreditation process holds much promise in ensuring that question of quality is not compromised – only accredited private HE institutions should be privileged with the opportunity of partnering with the public HE sector. It is simply the case of leveling the quality playing fields and making sure that students are not ‘short-changed’ with specific reference to questions of quality.

Experiences Gained and Sharing Lessons Learnt in Distance Education

Against the backdrop of a major global financial crisis, the escalating budget requirements for HE and our own experiences in delivering distance education as private providers of HE, we are cognisant and fully appreciative of the DHET’s draft policy initiatives, particularly in terms of the major massification challenges facing the HE sector in a post Apartheid South Africa. We are especially aware of the potential of distance education to increase the capacity and cost effectiveness of HE in reaching target groups with limited access to conventional education and training; in supporting and enhancing the quality and relevance of existing educational structures; in ensuring the connection of educational institutions and curricula to the emerging networks and information resources; and in promoting innovation and opportunities for lifelong learning.

This section, therefore will attempt, in the first instance, to summarize the prime lessons learnt in the process of establishing distance learning programmes at our respective private HE institutions and then argue as to why the government needs to partner with accredited private HE providers, in order that its financial burden is mitigated and its main goal of providing access to the disadvantaged post secondary learners is achieved. We are also hopeful that our submission regarding a possible PPP in HE in South Africa will stimulate further discussion and debate and assist in resolving a vexing and resilient problem for the DHET. In addition, we are of the sincere conviction that the future of thousands of HE learners and potential leaders depends on latent strategic and collective endeavour between the DHET and private HE providers.

The DHET’s policy document alludes to a range of problems and challenges that it considers important to resolve for the successful roll out of distance education. Indeed, our experiences can confirm that there are many problems and challenges in the delivery of distance education. While the DHET’s draft policy document deals with potential problems and challenges quite comprehensively, in this submission, we would prefer to deal with five key issues which we believe critically influenced the overall performance of distance education delivery at our institutions. They are (in no particular order of importance):

- i. Budgeting and Finance
- ii. Physical and Social Infrastructure
- iii. Human Resource Development
- iv. Epistemology and Pedagogy
- v. Technological Innovation

Budgeting and Finance

Starting any new venture, especially, one of the size and magnitude of a higher education distance education institution is always a huge undertaking and investment. It is definitely not a once off provision and needs constant input to meet the preferred outcomes of planning. The effectiveness of the financial investment which is calculated as a an outcome of the difference between student intake and fixed cost is only realized over many years and can become a demanding time for any private institution that does not have the luxury of acquiring governmental subsidies. Notwithstanding this situation, the DHET and the public HE sector institutions will have to make substantial investments to ensure the financial success and sustainability of distance education programmes.

Failure to provide an adequate budget for a distance education programme will invariably weigh down heavily on the outcome of such a venture (in the private or public sector), particularly in terms of efficiency, quality and quantity. Thus, financial strategic planning has to become a regular and integral process of the distance education environment.

Physical and Social Infrastructure

We can also testify that the roll out of distance education programmes requires substantial capital investment to establish and develop the necessary physical and social infrastructure. At the outset, we realized that efficient infrastructure was an absolute necessity within the hub of our institutions, given this would be the main centres from which all the major administrative and academic activities were to be coordinated. We also realized that in order to set up cost-efficient and flexible distance education systems, we needed to establish satellite offices. In other instances, we shared resources, such as libraries and resource centres with other HE institutions. All of these initiatives assisted in network efficiency and reducing initial set-up costs. Furthermore, we became acutely aware that it was essential to establish effective, responsive and flexible learner support systems for the students. In fact such a support system is now the nucleus and integral part, not only of our delivery system, but also for sustaining our endeavour in terms of quality and effectiveness. The DHET and public HE institutions should pay particular attention to this aspect of its envisaged distance education programme.

Furthermore, we bolstered all administrative and academic systems that were responsible for learning materials, copying services, timeouts feedback on written submissions from students, the call centre, reference material, record-keeping, assessment and evaluation systems and the overall integrity of the examination process (we even built a walk-in safe for duplication and storage of examination and test papers).

Human resources

Our experience has shown that requirements for human resources in distance education provision are substantially different from the requirements of a traditional contact-based higher education institution. Generally, while distance education providers require the traditional academics to plan and execute the delivery of the core curricula, the need for “support” staff is probably of the ratio of 1:5. Depending on the geographical range of programme delivery, human resources are required to cover a multitude of tasks, differentiated according to category, geographical extent, location, and overall support.

In any endeavour which prescribes service delivery, the question of human resource sustainability is of prime importance, especially in dealing with matters of recruitment, training, mentoring and retention. Lack of proper human resource policies and planning can seriously impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of the overall academic endeavour in distance education.

Epistemology and Pedagogy

It is generally accepted that distance education, in which the teacher and students are separated by time and place, is currently the fastest growing form of national and international education. One of the defining features of distance education and its epistemology is that there has been a paradigm shift to “student-centered-learning”. There are a number of advantages to the new formats of distance learning, such as making permanent professional contacts and networking, a greater amount of teacher support and a multimedia educational experience. With the advent and improvements in computer, digital and Internet technology, the shift from the traditional classroom experience to distance learning is logical. This is especially true for programmes that traditionally require large amounts of reading and written assignments, such as in business administration and finance and accounting.

Institutional memory informs us that the shift from classroom-based learning to that of distance-based learning required a fundamental transformation in our epistemology and pedagogy. Staff had to undergo training (and continually do so) to meet the rigours of the new epistemology. In terms of pedagogy, our programmes, especially the MBA is offered through a supported distance-learning mode, which involves a blend of workshops and lectures, syndicated learning, independent study as well as ongoing academic support and mentoring by faculty members. A dedicated student support division provides administrative support and counseling to learners throughout the programme.

The implementation of the distance learning epistemology which is largely of a constructivist approach informed and shaped the pedagogical learning curve for our institutions and continues to do so, as new technological improvements are added to our teaching and learning arsenal for distance education. It is a continuous process. The DHET and public HE institutions need to be particularly cognizant of this issue as it has an important bearing on the outcome of quality in distance education.

Technological Innovation

If new technologies are to be successfully used in distance education they need to be affordable, accessible and conveniently located for learners. The issue of costs of distance education systems, however, is difficult to resolve partly because of the poor quality of data that is available and partly because of the differences between the economic structures of distance education and those of conventional education. The choice of teaching media in distance education, for instance, will have a direct influence on the total cost of setting up the system (with most costs having to be met up-front), and therefore on the cost per student basis.

In terms of pedagogy, computer technologies are currently being used to support correspondence teaching and face-to-face instruction. Moreover, in the African situation, the cost factor and the lack of computer literacy has proved to be a serious drawback for the proper application of new technologies.

Exploring Public-Private Sector Partnerships in Higher Education: To Be or Not to Be?

We can only benchmark best practice in terms of the successful delivery of any distance education programme. There are no hard and fast rules to work with. Besides having the will and determination to succeed, the delivery of sustainable distance education programmes will depend,

largely, on the five factors discussed above. This then brings us to a critical juncture in this paper. We do so by asking a rhetorical question. Do the DHET and public HE institutions have the luxury of time, additional financial and other resources and infrastructure to implement such an overwhelming task, especially given the immediate problems and challenges of unemployment, skills needs, access and development that South Africa currently faces? In response, the answer is a simple no.

To support our response, we assert that the time is ripe for a more innovative approach to tackle the problems and challenges that confront the HE sector in South Africa. Towards this end, we would like to recommend that the DHET invokes the principle of a Social Contract within the constructs of the Development State. The success of this social compact will depend on the active involvement of all stakeholders - a strong emphasis on building a broad front and partnership between the DHET, the private sector and civil society. In this respect, we are of the sincere conviction that accredited private distance education institutions with the necessary 'know how', infrastructure, and a sincere commitment to nation-building be contracted by the DHET to collectively translate the broad objectives and rhetoric of the new distance education policy framework into reality – developing a twin-pronged attack on one of the most challenging problems of our time – access to HE.

Conclusion

International evidence confirms the notion that HE is widely believed to be decisive for any nation's economic, political, and social development. It is, as the former President of Ghana (Kwame Nkrumah) once asserted – the 'Passport to Development'. The notion has also coerced governments into believing that they should bear the sole responsibility of providing HE for their young and aspiring matriculates. Global verification has confirmed otherwise. This responsibility is too large and complex for any government to meet adequately, which is why it is important for governments to explore innovative ways of financing and providing services that would widen the scope for access in HE institutions. The time, therefore, has come to confront an inconvenient truth. We need to boldly 'traverse new virtual terrains' and PPPs are proving to be the most plausible solution to an incommensurable problem.

It is our sincere hope that this article will engender debate about the question of PPPs and the role they could play in successfully addressing the issues of access, equity and finance in South African HE. We also eagerly await the positive outcomes of these deliberations and hope that PPPs will contribute significantly in resolving some of the crises in the South African HE sector. We are confident that given an opportunity, PPPs will more than hold their own and could in time become vanguards in determining the outcomes of similar chronic exigencies in other parts of Africa.

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The Quest to Realign the Geo-strategic Compass and Russia's Imperative to Re-impose the Resource Problematique in Africa

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Abstract: *The advent of the new century has brought with it new changes, and in this respect Russia has become acutely aware that in order for it to survive and hold its own in the global political economy, it will have to look beyond its borders for new resources. It has also realized that it cannot count on the former centres of power as a source of finite resources and needs to leverage its geostrategic influence, primarily because it requires many of the finite resources, which are beginning to dwindle. This paper, therefore, provides a critical analysis of Russia's quest for resources within the African context. In particular, the paper deals with the country's recent imperative in Africa. The paper concludes with a prognosis of Russia's future political economy and resource extraction in Africa.*

Introduction

In recent years most major developed countries of the world have become acutely aware that in order for them to survive and hold their own in the global political economy, they will have to look beyond their borders for new resources. In this regard, Russia is fully aware that it has to assert its influence if it is to be regarded as a major player on the world's stage. It also realizes that it cannot count on the former centres of power as a source of finite resources. Subsequent to the global financial crisis, the emphasis has shifted south to Africa which is now regarded as an emerging continent. Russia's interest in Africa is not new. Prior to the 1990s, Russia played a major part in Africa, especially in Africa's quest for independence. It is only recently that Russia has once again showed interest in Africa. This new found interest surfaced only after Russia dealt with its own personal crisis that related to the fall of the USSR. In the second decade of the new millennium, though, Russia has made a comeback to Africa, largely because it needs to leverage its geostrategic influence and also because it requires many of the finite resources which are beginning to dwindle in the more developed world.

This briefing paper, therefore, provides an analysis of Russia and its relationship with Africa. In particular, the paper deals with the country's recent imperative in Africa, a brief history of its past relationship, a record of its trading patterns, its interest in raw materials, energy resources, and the arms trade. The paper concludes with a prognosis of Russia's future political economy with specific reference to Africa.

Russia and Africa: a Brief History

Russia, similar to many developed economies of the world is still reeling after the recent financial crisis. Although Russia was involved in Africa previously, its imprint has not been indelible. In fact its relationship with Africa, especially compared to some of the other BRICS partners, the USA and the European Union, has been, and continues being relatively underdeveloped.

As mentioned previously, Russia is attempting to find its geostrategic bearing, especially since the fall of the Soviet Union. Simultaneously, Russia has also been strategic in attempting to improve its foreign policy relationships with many countries of the world and in this respect, Africa is regarded as an important player. The special interest in Africa, though, is not Russia's special preserve – almost all developed countries interested in natural resources have also joined the queue. Interest in Africa's natural resources also means that countries of the north need to invest and this has become a major challenge for Russia. Consequently, Russia has no coordinated foreign policy rubric that pertains to a strategic relationship with Africa. Investment, when it does

occur, is largely in the hands of the private sector and extraction of raw materials is mainly for commercial profits.

Prior to 1950s USSR's (which included Russia) interest in Africa was at a minimum, primarily because it believed that Africa was part of the colonial empire and was held in bondage by the capitalist system of the west. However, the 1950s was also a decade when independence movements began to surface in Africa and with Nikita Khrushchev taking over from Josef Stalin, the scenario changed dramatically for the USSR's interest in Africa. The USSR was opportunistic and grabbed the opportunity to side with many of the revolutionary movements that mushroomed in Africa. As Bervoets (2011) notes, this was the beginning of the USSR's direct involvement in Africa. In this respect Egypt was the first benefactor of a USSR arms deal and diplomatic treaties were established with countries such as Ghana, Guinea, Morocco, Mali, Sudan and Libya. This new bloc of countries which established diplomatic ties with Russia was referred to as the '*Casablanca Bloc*'. It was a sinister attempt by the USSR to use the Casablanca bloc to contest western capitalism. It also used the new relationship with certain African countries to promote its arms sales.

The 1960s, moreover, ushered in a new relationship between the USSR and Africa. The USSR realised that its political strategy of destabilising many countries in North Africa failed and there was need to engage at both economic and political level. Their attention turned south and the USSR began to sponsor military aggression against Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Angola and Mozambique (former Portuguese colonies) and South Africa (Shubin, 2008). This type of relationship between the USSR and Africa continued until the end of the 1980s. The collapse of the USSR in 1991 motivated it to look inwardly to its own problems and challenges and that process forced the USSR to put its relationship with Africa on the back burner.

With the collapse of the USSR, Russia became a federation in its own right and its foreign policy changed dramatically – it was compelled to look centripetally to re-establish its *bona fides* at home. The preoccupation with internal chaos and political pressures further compounded Russia's problems and forced it to abandon its interests in Africa. As Natufe (2011) points out, Russia closed nine Embassies, three Consulates and multiple Cultural Centres in Africa, consequently. Simultaneously, Russia began to call back its African debt and this led to a serious fracture in Russia–Africa relationships. When Russian interests in Africa were rekindled, the debt issue and the sudden abandonment of African countries in the 1990s left a void that was difficult to re-bridge. China, Brazil and India have filled that void.

In recent years there has been a resurgence of Russian interest in Africa and in this regard, political leaders such Dmitry Medvedev and Vladimir Putin have made visits to Africa hoping to re-intensify Russia–Africa relationships. Joint treaties in economic cooperation, trade and healthcare have been signed by South Africa, Namibia, Nigeria and Ethiopia. Moreover, Russia's interest in raw materials takes centre stage of its interest in Africa, as the following sections will exemplify.

Russia-Africa: a Contemporary Relationship

Russian interests in Africa are broad based and include political aspirations, economic goals, resource interests and trade. The sections below will outline these broad-based issues and deal with them in sufficient detail.

Russia's Political Aspirations in Africa

Russia has realised that if it is to restore its former standing as a political player on the world's stage and in Africa, it will have to restore its former pride as a super power. It needs to reassert

itself as a political actor that has the interest of Africa foremost in its mind. As much as this new cloak of diplomacy requires a Soft Power approach, financial investment is a necessary corollary for it to win the ‘hearts and minds’ of African leadership.

In view of the above, Russian political strategy is to remind African leaders that it has never been a colonial power and contrary to accepted rhetoric, it never left Africa. In local and regional African press Russia has also been at pains to mention that its new approach to Africa is ‘ideologically free’ (Shubin, 2008).

One of the methods Moscow uses in this attempt to regain influence is to keep Russia’s Soviet involvement and role as a non-colonial power prominent in media reporting and in official Russian speeches on African relations. Russian politicians and academics assert that Russia never left Africa, nor were they ever going to do so in the future.

According to Shubin (2010) the prime aim of Russia’s foreign policy is to assert itself in the global political arena as a counter to the influence of the USA, China and the European Union in Africa. In this respect, Russia fully realizes its power as a member of the UN Security Council with powers of veto. It could use this power as a leverage to attract African allies and also to assist them when needed. Shubin (2010) also notes that Russia provides support to the African Union through its involvement in peacekeeping. It is ironic that Russia now seeks to keep peace and regional stability in Africa, especially given that it needs to protect its investments and to secure raw materials.

Overall, though, Russia realizes that for it to reassert itself as a major player in Africa, it will have to compete with its partners in BRICS and the USA and the European Union. In this connection, it has a lot of catching up to do.

Russia’s Economic Goals in Africa

Russia needs Africa to secure replacement for its finite natural resources. Towards this end, the Russian Ministry of Economic Development (2008) in a plan entitled “Foreign Economic Strategy of the Russian Federation to 2020” clearly states that the main goal of foreign economic policy is to encourage sustainable trade and investment relations with African, Asian and other Middle Eastern countries with the sole intention of supporting the export market in machinery and technical products.

The 2008 report clearly identifies the following priorities of the foreign economic strategy:

- Prospecting, mining, oil, construction and mining, purchasing gas, oil, uranium, and bauxite assets (Angola, Nigeria, Sudan, South Africa, Namibia, etc.);
- Construction of power facilities—hydroelectric power plants on the River Congo (Angola, Zambia, Namibia, and Equatorial Guinea) and nuclear power plants (South Africa and Nigeria);
- Creating a floating nuclear power plant, and South African participation in the international project to build a nuclear enrichment centre in Russia;
- Railway Construction (Nigeria, Guinea, and Angola);
- Creation of Russian trade houses for the promotion and maintenance of Russian engineering products (Nigeria and South Africa).

Within the purview of the above priorities, commercial firms have been entasked to privatize former state owned companies, as is evidenced in the table below.

Russia’s Resource Interest in Africa

Russia’s interest in Resources is clearly evidenced by Table 2 below. As mentioned previously, Russia’s resource base, especially in terms of certain minerals is expected to be depleted in the not far future, and this has prompted its leaders to look for these resources outside its borders.

This does not mean that Russia has depleted all its resources. The cost of mining some of these resources is not economically viable and places like Africa have become a source of easily accessible minerals – both in terms of cost and long term mutual benefits. Africa has become a major target. Thus, Table 2 illustrates the expected dates of depletion of certain minerals and their availability in Africa.

Table 1: Major Investments of Russian Companies in Africa

Company/ Investor name	Host Country/ Company	Industry	Type of Investment	Value	Year
Norilsk Nickel	South Africa <i>Gold Fields</i>	Gold mining and processing	M&A (acquired 30% of Gold Fields)	US\$1.16 billion	2004
Norilsk Nickel	Botswana <i>Tati Nickel</i>	Nickel mining and processing	M&A (acquisition of Canada Lion Ore Mining gave it 85% stake in Tati Nickel)	US\$2.5 billion	2007
Sintez	South Africa, Namibia, Angola	Oil, gas, diamonds and copper exploration	'Greenfield' Investment	US\$10- 50 million	2006
Lukoil	Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana	Oil exploration	M&A (acquired interest in 10,500 km ² deep water blocks)	US\$900 million	2010
Rusal	Nigeria <i>ALSCON</i>	Aluminium refining	M&A (acquired majority stake in Aluminium Smelter Company - ALSCON of Nigeria)	US\$250 million	
Severstal	Liberia	Iron ore	M&A (acquired control of iron ore deposit in Putu Range area of Liberia)	US\$40 million	2008
Gazprom	Algeria <i>Sonatrach</i>	Natural gas exploration	Joint exploration and development projects by debt write-off agreement and arms deal	US\$4.7 billion and US\$7.5 billion	2006
Alrosa	Angola, Namibia, DRC	Diamond mining, and hydroelectricity	Greenfield Investment	US\$300- 400 million	1992
Rosatom	Egypt	Nuclear power	Ongoing negotiations to build Egypt's first nuclear power plant	US\$1.8 billion	2010

Source: African Development Bank 2010

Table 2: Estimated Mineral Depletion Dates and Availability in Africa

Russia's Natural Resource Base Complementarities with Southern Africa				
Mineral	Year in which Russia will deplete		SADC countries that possess reserves of the mineral (in alphabetical order)	SADC share in the world's total resources of the mineral
	economically producible reserves	all reserves		
Lead	2007	Beyond 2025	Namibia / South Africa / Zambia	-
Manganese ores	2008	Beyond 2025	DRC / South Africa	83%
Zinc	2011	Beyond 2025	DRC / Namibia / Zambia	-
Chromium ores	2013	Beyond 2025	Madagascar / South Africa / Zimbabwe	93%
Diamonds	2013	Beyond 2025	Angola / Botswana / DRC / Lesotho / Namibia / South Africa / Tanzania	>50%
Quartz	2013	2013	Madagascar / Mozambique	-
Tin	2015	Beyond 2025	DRC / Namibia / South Africa / Tanzania / Zimbabwe	-
Uranium	2015	Beyond 2025	Angola / DRC / Namibia / South Africa / Zambia	12%