

4 May 2004

#### THE FIRST MEETING OF THE COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

1. The Commission for Africa held its first meeting in London on 4 May 2004. Prime Minister Tony Blair chaired the meeting. The Commission has 16 members, all of whom are working in a personal capacity. They come from a wide range of backgrounds, including serving politicians and leaders from the private sector and civil society.

2. The creation of the Commission in February 2004 was a personal initiative by Tony Blair and reflects the urgent need to generate effective action for Africa, and for a fresh look at how to do that. 2005 presents a real opportunity. First, the UK will hold the presidencies of both the G8 and the EU in 2005, and will put Africa high on both agendas. The UK's commitment is already demonstrated, for example with aid to Africa to reach £1 billion in 2005/06. Also in 2005, the UN will review progress towards the 2015 target to achieve the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It will find that Africa is way off track to meet those goals.

3. 2005 is also the 20th anniversary of Live Aid. Bob Geldof has been influential in the establishment of the Commission and is one of the Commissioners.

4. The initiative has come from the UK, but this is not a British Commission. Most of the Commissioners (nine out of 16) come from Africa. The Commission will also set out to hear a wide range of African views, including from civil society and the African Diaspora, in the course of its work. This will form part of a wide consultation by the Commissioners. The Commission's work will be supported by the newly established Secretariat based in London.

5. The Commission will not duplicate or replace existing international processes. It will seek to support and encourage the best of existing work, in particular the African leadership shown through the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Union.

6. On 4 May, the Commission agreed the main themes around which the work of the Commission will be organised, and a working level division of responsibilities for each theme. The Commission also paid particular attention to cross-cutting issues, and linkages between the themes. The Commissioners agreed to reflect all these aspects in their working methods, through exchange of information and all Commissioners having opportunities to comment on the different issues. The Commissioners agreed to hold a second meeting in October 2004.

7. The main themes are the economy (including development finance, economic integration and trade); conflict resolution and peacebuilding; human development (including education and health); natural resources (including the environment, food security and agriculture); governance; and culture, heritage and participation. HIV/AIDS, gender, migration and private sector participation are among a wide range of cross-cutting issues which will also be considered.

8. The Commissioners are:

**Rt. Hon. Tony Blair MP**, (Chair) Prime Minister of the United Kingdom

**Fola Adeola**, Chairman of FATE foundation, Nigeria

**K. Y. Amoako**, Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Africa, United Nations Under-Secretary-General, Ghana

**Senator Nancy Landon Kassebaum Baker**, US

**Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP**, Secretary of State for International Development, UK

**Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP**, Chancellor of the Exchequer, UK

**Michel Camdessus**, Africa Personal Representative, France

**Bob Geldof**, Musician, Ireland

**Hon Ralph Goodale P.C.**, MP, Minister of Finance, Canada

**Dr. William S. Kalema**, Chairman of the Board of the Uganda Investment Authority

**Trevor Manuel**, Minister of Finance, South Africa

**Benjamin Mkapa**, President of Tanzania

**Linah K Mohohlo**, Governor, Bank of Botswana

**Tidjane Thiam**, Group Strategy and Development Director Aviva PLC, Côte D'Ivoire

**Dr. Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka**, Under-Secretary-General & Executive Director of UN HABITAT, Tanzania

**Meles Zenawi**, Prime Minister of Ethiopia

9. The working level allocation of thematic responsibilities at the 4 May meeting was as follows:

**Economy**

Gordon Brown  
Trevor Manuel  
Ralph Goodale

**Natural Resources**

Meles Zenawi  
Michel Camdessus

**Human Development**

William Kalema  
Benjamin Mkapa

**Governance**

Linah Mohohlo  
K.Y. Amoako

**Peace and Security**

Tidjane Thiam  
Nancy Baker

**Culture and Participation**

Bob Geldof  
Anna Tibaijuka  
Fola Adeola

10 A press conference was held at the end of the 4 May meeting. A full copy of the transcript is available at:

<http://www.number-10.gov.uk/output/Page5744.asp>

Secretariat to the Commission for Africa  
20 Victoria Street  
London SW1H 0NF  
Enquiries: tel +44 (0) 207 023 1869  
[Africa\\_Secretariat@dfid.gov.uk](mailto:Africa_Secretariat@dfid.gov.uk)