The Bottom Billion

Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It

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OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS
2007

Preface

I WAS A STUDENT at Oxford in 1968. I remember joining something called the Oxford Revolutionary Socialist Students, a name now beyond parody. But it all seemed simple then. When I graduated I wanted to put my knowledge of economics to use in Africa. Africa's new countries were ill-equipped, and scarcely any Africans had received the sort of education I had just been through. At the time many Oxford students had family connections with Africa, as their fathers had been colonial administrators. Not in my case—my father was a butcher in Yorkshire. But some of those colonial connections must have rubbed off on me: the father of my friend had been the governor general of a little country called Nyasaland, and so I read up on it. What I read made me resolve to go there. Renamed Malawi, it was the poorest country on the continent. It is easier to rename countries than to change them: thirty-five years later it is still as dirt poor as it was then. In another thirty-five years I doubt it will be much different, unless . . . This book is about that "unless."

Malawi hasn't changed much in the last thirty-five years, and in one sense neither have I: I'm still working on Africa, now as a professor at Oxford. In between I've been a professor at Harvard, and directed the World Bank's research department, where I was brought in by Joe Stiglitz to strengthen its focus on the poorest countries. Indeed, my first assignment for the World Bank was to go with Joe to Ethiopia. Since I had just married, the trip was my honeymoon, but with Joe instead of my wife. Fortunately, she was understanding—whether by coincidence or the attraction of like minds, after university she had worked in Malawi.

This book is about the Malawis and the Ethiopias of this world, the minority of developing countries that are now at the bottom of the global economic system. Some, such as Malawi, have always been at the bottom. Others, including Sierra Leone, once were less poor than India or China. The countries now at the bottom are distinctive not just in being the poorest but also in having failed to grow. They are not following the development path of most other nations; they are adrift. As once-poor India and China, and countries like them, surged ahead, the global poverty picture has been confused, concealing this divergent pattern. Of course, for some countries to do relatively better, others must do relatively worse. But the decline of the countries now at the bottom is not just relative; often it is absolute. Many of these countries are not just falling behind, they are falling apart.

For the past few years much of my work has been on civil war. I wanted to understand why conflict was increasingly concentrated in low-income Africa. Gradually, I developed the notion of the "conflict trap." It shows how certain economic conditions make a country prone to civil war, and how, once conflict has started, the cycle of violence becomes a trap from which it is difficult to escape. I realized that the conflict trap was one explanation for the countries now at the bottom of the world economy. But it was not the whole story. Malawi has been conflict-free for its entire postindependence history, yet it still has not developed. Neither have Kenya and Nigeria, countries on which at different stages in my career I wrote books, and which looked neither like Malawi nor like each other. Nor do I believe that poverty itself is a trap. These development failures occurred against a backdrop of global development success—poverty is something that most people are managing to escape. Since 1980 world poverty has been falling for the first time in history. Nor was it just a matter of Africa. Elsewhere there were also development failures: countries such as Haiti, Laos, Burma, and the Central Asian countries, of which Afghanistan has been the most spectacular. A one-size-fits-all explanation for development failure doesn't ring true against such diversity.

Part of the reason single-factor theories about development failure are so common is that modern academics tend to specialize: they are trained to produce intense but narrow beams of light. However, in my career I have written books on rural development, labor markets, macroeconomic shocks, investment, and conflict. And for a while I was working for Joe Stiglitz, who really was interested in everything and had something ingenious to say about much of it. This breadth has its advantages. Eventually I came to see that four distinct traps explain the countries now at the bottom. Between them they account for around a billion people. If nothing is done about it, this group will gradually diverge from the rest of the world economy over the next couple of decades, forming a ghetto of misery and discontent.

The problems these countries have are very different from those we have addressed for the past four decades in what we have called "developing countries"—that is, virtually all countries besides the most developed, which account for only one-sixth of the earth's people. For all this time we have defined developing countries so as to encompass five billion of the six billion people in the world. But not all developing countries are the same. Those where development has failed face intractable problems not found in the countries that are succeeding. We have, in fact, done the easier part of global development; finishing the job now gets more difficult. Finish it we must, because an impoverished ghetto of one billion people will be increasingly impossible for a comfortable world to tolerate.

Unfortunately, it is not just about giving these countries our money. If it were, it would be relatively easy because there are not that many of them. With some important exceptions, aid does not work so well in these environments, at least as it has been provided in the past. Change in the societies at the very bottom must come predominantly from within; we cannot impose it on them. In all these societies there are struggles between brave people wanting change and entrenched interests opposing it. To date, we have largely been bystanders in this struggle. We can do much more to strengthen the hand of the reformers. But to do so we will need to draw upon tools—such as military interventions, international standard-setting, and trade policy—that to date have been used for other purposes. The agencies that control these instruments have neither knowledge of nor interest in the problems of the bottom billion. They will need to learn, and governments will need to learn how to coordinate this wide range of policies.

These ideas open horizons across the political divide. The left will find that approaches it has discounted, such as military interventions, trade, and encouraging growth, are critical means to the ends it has long embraced. The right will find that, unlike the challenge of global poverty reduction, the problem of the bottom billion will not be fixed automatically by global growth, and that neglect now will become a security nightmare for the world of our children. We can crack this problem; indeed, we must. But to do so, we need to build a unity of purpose.

To build a unity of purpose, thinking needs to change, not just within the development agencies but among the wider electorates whose views shape what is possible. Without an informed electorate, politicians will continue to use the bottom billion merely for photo opportunities, rather than promoting real transformation. This book is an attempt to shift thinking; it is written to be read, and so I have kept clear of footnotes and the rest of the usual grim apparatus of professional scholarship. I have tried to write something that you can enjoy reading. But don't let that lead you to conclude that what I have to say is just a load of froth. Underpinning the book are a mass of technical papers published in professional journals and subjected to blind refereeing. I list some of them at the end of the book.

Research is often like a quest. You start with a question that sounds impossible to answer: how much aid leaks into military spending, or how much of Africa's wealth has fled the continent. How would you go about answering those questions? Ask each third-world army where it got its money? Knock on the doors of the Swiss banks and ask them to report their African accounts? There is a different way of getting to the answers, and it is statistical. This stands in contrast to the crude images that often provide us with what we think we know about the world. For rebellion, as an example, the image is often that of Che Guevara, ubiquitous in my generation as a poster on student walls. The poster did our thinking for us. Our notions about the problems of the poorest countries are saturated with such images: not just of noble rebels but of starving children, heartless businesses, crooked politicians. You are held prisoner by these images. While you are held prisoner, so are our politicians, because they do what you want. I am going to take you beyond images. Sometimes I am going to smash them. And my image smasher is statistical evidence.

In conducting my statistical analysis I have relied on quite a few young collaborators, many of whom you will meet in the pages that follow. One of them, Anke Hoeffler, has been central to much of this work. We have

worked together for a decade, a double act in which I play the role of the impossibly annoying professor, while Anke somehow keeps her temper and presses on. If you want a somewhat exaggerated image of how we work, you could do worse than picture Morse and Lewis from the famous British detective series. As with them, our research usually involves a lot of false starts. However, though like Morse I am based in Oxford, unlike him I work with a highly international group. As you will have guessed, Anke is German. But there are also Måns, who is Swedish; Lisa, who is French; Steve, an Irish American; Cathy, an African American; Victor, from Sierra Leone; and Phil, an Australian. This is only part of a long list, but you get the idea. What they all have in common is the patience to be painstaking and the brains to have mastered difficult skills. Without them, there would have been no book, because there would have been no results on which to base the story. This book is the big picture that emerges when you connect the dots. But the dots are a story in themselves. Although this is not a book about research, I hope that along the way you will get some of the flavor of how modern research is done, and a sense of the thrill that comes from cracking intractable questions.

CHAPTER 1

Falling Behind and Falling Apart: The Bottom Billion

THE THIRD WORLD HAS SHRUNK. For forty years the development challenge has been a rich world of one billion people facing a poor world of five billion people. The Millennium Development Goals established by the United Nations, which are designed to track development progress through 2015, encapsulate this thinking. By 2015, however, it will be apparent that this way of conceptualizing development has become outdated. Most of the five billion, about 80 percent, live in countries that are indeed developing, often at amazing speed. The real challenge of development is that there is a group of countries at the bottom that are falling behind, and often falling apart.

The countries at the bottom coexist with the twenty-first century, but their reality is the fourteenth century: civil war, plague, ignorance. They are concentrated in Africa and Central Asia, with a scattering elsewhere. Even during the 1990s, in retrospect the golden decade between the end of the Cold War and 9/11, incomes in this group declined by 5 percent. We must learn to turn the familiar numbers upside down: a total of five billion people who are already prosperous, or at least are on track to be so, and one billion who are stuck at the bottom.

This problem matters, and not just to the billion people who are living and dying in fourteenth-century conditions. It matters to us. The twenty-first-century world of material comfort, global travel, and economic interdependence will become increasingly vulnerable to these large islands of chaos. And it matters now. As the bottom billion diverges from an increasingly sophisticated world economy, integration will become harder, not easier.

And yet it is a problem denied, both by development *biz* and by development *buzz*. Development biz is run by the aid agencies and the companies that get the contracts for their projects. They will fight this thesis with the tenacity of bureaucracies endangered, because they like things the way they are. A definition of development that encompasses five billion people gives them license to be everywhere, or more honestly, everywhere but the bottom billion. At the bottom, conditions are rather rough. Every development agency has difficulty getting its staff to serve in Chad and Laos; the glamour postings are for countries such as Brazil and China. The World Bank has large offices in every major middle-income country but not a single person resident in the Central African Republic. So don't expect the development biz to refocus voluntarily.

Development buzz is generated by rock stars, celebrities, and NGOs. To its credit, it does focus on the plight of the bottom billion. It is thanks to development buzz that Africa gets on the agenda of the G8. But inevitably, development buzz has to keep its messages simple, driven by the need for slogans, images, and anger. Unfortunately, although the plight of the bottom billion lends itself to simple moralizing, the answers do not. It is a problem that needs to be hit with several policies at the same time, some of them counterintuitive. Don't look to development buzz to formulate such an agenda: it is at times a headless heart.

What of the governments of the countries at the bottom? The prevailing conditions bring out extremes. Leaders are sometimes psychopaths who have shot their way to power, sometimes crooks who have bought it, and sometimes brave people who, against the odds, are trying to build a better future. Even the appearance of modern government in these states is sometimes a façade, as if the leaders are reading from a script. They sit at the international negotiating tables, such as the World Trade Organization, but they have nothing to negotiate. The seats stay occupied even in the face of meltdown in their societies: the government of Somalia continued to be officially "represented" in the international arena for years after Somalia ceased to have a functioning government in the country itself. So don't expect the governments of the bottom billion to unite in formulating

a practical agenda: they are fractured between villains and heroes, and some of them are barely there. For our future world to be livable the heroes must win their struggle. But the villains have the guns and the money, and to date they have usually prevailed. That will continue unless we radically change our approach.

All societies used to be poor. Most are now lifting out of it; why are others stuck? The answer is traps. Poverty is not intrinsically a trap, otherwise we would all still be poor. Think, for a moment, of development as chutes and ladders. In the modern world of globalization there are some fabulous ladders; most societies are using them. But there are also some chutes, and some societies have hit them. The countries at the bottom are an unlucky minority, but they are stuck.

Traps, and the Countries Caught in Them

Suppose your country is dirt poor, almost stagnant economically, and that few people are educated. You don't have to try that hard to imagine this condition—our ancestors lived this way. With hard work, thrift, and intelligence, a society can gradually climb out of poverty, unless it gets trapped. Development traps have become a fashionable area of academic dispute, with a fairly predictable right-left divide. The right tends to deny the existence of development traps, asserting that any country adopting good policies will escape poverty. The left tends to see global capitalism as inherently generating a poverty trap.

The concept of a development trap has been around for a long time and is most recently associated with the work of the economist Jeffrey Sachs, who has focused on the consequences of malaria and other health problems. Malaria keeps countries poor, and because they are poor the potential market for a vaccine is not sufficiently valuable to warrant drug companies making the huge investment in research that is necessary. This book is about four traps that have received less attention: the conflict trap, the natural resources trap, the trap of being landlocked with bad neighbors, and the trap of bad governance in a small country. Like many developing countries that are now succeeding, all the countries that are the focus of this book are poor. Their distinctive feature is that they got caught in one or another of the traps. These traps are not inescapable, however, and over the years some countries have broken free of them and then started to catch up. Unfortunately, that process of catching up has itself recently stalled. Those countries that have only broken clear of the traps during the last decade have faced a new problem: the global market is now far more hostile to new entrants than it was in the 1980s. The countries newly escaped from the traps may have missed the boat, finding themselves in a limbo-like world in which growth is constrained by external factors; this will be the theme in my discussion of globalization. When Mauritius escaped the traps in the 1980s it rocketed to middle-income levels; when neighboring Madagascar finally escaped the traps two decades later, there was no rocket.

Most countries have stayed clear of any of the traps that are the subject of this book. But countries with a combined population of around one billion people have got caught in them. Underlying that statement are some definitions. For example, one of the traps involves being landlocked—although being landlocked is not sufficient to constitute the trap. But when is a country landlocked? You might think that such a matter is clear enough from an atlas. But what about Zaire, which after the ruinous reign of President Mobutu understandably rebranded itself as the Democratic Republic of the Congo? It is *virtually* landlocked but has a tiny sliver of coast. And Sudan has some coast, but most of its people live far away from it.

In defining these traps I have had to draw lines somewhat arbitrarily, and this creates gray areas. Most developing countries are clearly heading toward success, and others are just as clearly heading toward what might be described as a black hole. For some, however, we really cannot tell. Perhaps Papua New Guinea is heading for success; I hope so, and that is how I have classified it. But there are some experts on Papua New Guinea who would shake their heads in disbelief at that. The judgment calls are inevitably going to be open to challenge. But such challenges do not discredit the underlying thesis: that there is a black hole, and that many countries are indisputably heading into it, rather than being drawn toward success. You will learn more about the fine judgments as the book progresses. For the moment take it on trust that I have drawn the lines defensibly.

Given the way I have drawn the lines, as of 2006 there are around 980 million people living in these trapped countries. Since their populations are growing, by the time you read this the figure will be hovering around

the one billion mark. Seventy percent of these people are in Africa, and most Africans are living in countries that have been in one or another of the traps. Africa is therefore the core of the problem. The rest of the world has spotted that. Think of how the international commissions on development have evolved. The first major development commission was established in 1970, led by a former prime minister of Canada. The Pearson Commission took a global focus on development problems. It was followed in 1980 by a commission led by a former chancellor of Germany. The Brandt Commission took the same global focus. By 2005, when Britain's Tony Blair decided to launch a commission on development, the focus had shrunk to Africa: this was a commission *for Africa,* not for development. In 2006 President Horst Köhler of Germany decided that he too would have a development event. He could hardly just repeat Tony Blair—not another Commission for Africa in the very next year. So he called it a forum, but it was still a forum *for Africa*. In reality, however, Africa and the third world are not coterminous. South Africa, for example, is not among the bottom billion—it is manifestly not in the same desperate situation as Chad. Conversely, much of landlocked Central Asia is disturbingly like Chad. So the countries of the bottom billion do not form a group with a convenient geographic label. When I want to use a geographic label for them I describe them as "Africa +," with the + being places such as Haiti, Bolivia, the Central Asian countries, Laos, Cambodia, Yemen, Burma, and North Korea. They all either are still in one of the traps or escaped too late.

I have identified fifty-eight countries that fall into this group, which highlights one typical feature—they are small. Combined, they have fewer people than either India or China. And since their per capita income is also very low, the income of the typical country is negligible, less than that of most rich-world cities. Because this is not company that countries are keen to be in, and because stigmatizing a country tends to create a self-fulfilling prophecy, I will not present a list of these countries. Rather, I will give plenty of examples in each of the traps.

So, how have the countries of the bottom billion been doing? First, consider how people live, or rather die. In the bottom billion average life expectancy is fifty years, whereas in the other developing countries it is sixty-seven years. Infant mortality—the proportion of children who die before their fifth birthday—is 14 percent in the bottom billion, whereas in the other developing countries it is 4 percent. The proportion of children with symptoms of long-term malnutrition is 36 percent in the bottom billion as against 20 percent for the other developing countries.

The Role of Growth in Development

Has this gap between the bottom billion and the rest of the developing world always been there, or has it come about because the bottom billion have been trapped? To find out, we have to disaggregate the statistics that have been used in the past to describe all the countries that we label as "developing." Here's a hypothetical example. Prosperia has a big economy that is growing at 10 percent, but the country has only a small population. Catastrophia is a small economy declining at 10 percent, but it has a large population. The usual approach—employed, for example, by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its flagship publication *World Economic Outlook*—is to average figures that relate to the size of a country's economy. On this approach, Prosperia's large, growing economy skews the average upward, and so in aggregate the two countries are described as growing. The problem is that this describes what is going on from the perspective of the typical unit of income, not from the perspective of the typical person. Most units of income are in Prosperia, but most people are in Catastrophia. If we want to describe what the typical person experiences in the countries of the bottom billion, we need to work with figures based not on a country's income but on its population. Does it matter? Well, it does if the poorest countries are diverging from the rest, which is the thesis of this book, because averaging by income dismisses the poorest countries as unimportant. The experience of their people does not count for much precisely because they are poor—their income is negligible.

When we get the data appropriately averaged, what do we find? Those developing countries that are not part of the bottom billion—the middle four billion—have experienced rapid and accelerating growth in per capita income. Let's take it decade by decade. During the 1970s they grew at 2.5 percent a year, hopeful but not remarkable. During the 1980s and 1990s their growth rate accelerated to 4 percent a year. During the first few years of the twenty-first century it accelerated again to over 4.5 percent. These growth rates may not sound sensational, but they are without precedent in

history. They imply that children in these countries will grow up to have lives dramatically different from those of their parents. Even where people are still poor, these societies can be suffused with hope: time is on their side.

But how about the bottom billion? Let's again take it decade by decade. During the 1970s their per capita income rose at 0.5 percent a year, so they were becoming slightly better off in absolute terms but at a rate that was likely to be barely perceptible. Given the high degree of volatility of individual incomes in these societies, the slight overall tendency to improvement is likely to have been drowned by these individual risks. The overall tenor of the society will have been dominated by individual fears of falling rather than hope coming from society-wide progress. But in the 1980s the performance of the bottom billion got much worse, *declining* at 0.4 percent a year. In absolute terms, by the end of the 1980s they were back to where they had been in 1970. If you had been living in these societies over that full sweep of twenty years, the only economic experience was of individual volatility: some people went up and some went down. There was no society-wide reason for hope. And then came the 1990s. This is now seen as the golden decade, between the end of the Cold War and 9/11—the decade of the cloudless sky and booming markets. It wasn't so golden for the bottom billion: their rate of absolute decline accelerated to 0.5 percent a year. By the turn of the millennium they were therefore poorer than they had been in 1970.

Is this dismal performance just an artifact of the data? I think that, on the contrary, the genuine problems that afflict the gathering of economic data in the poorest countries are likely overall to have caused an underestimate of their decline. For the countries that have really fallen apart, there are no usable data. For example, the estimated decline among the bottom-billion countries during the 1990s does not include whatever might have been happening in Somalia and Afghanistan. But excluding them is equivalent to assuming that their performance was exactly at the average for the group, and I would be surprised, to say the least, if this was true; I would think it was much worse. In the first four years of the present decade the growth of the bottom billion has picked up to around 1.7 percent, still far below that of the rest of the developing world, but markedly better in absolute terms. Unfortunately, however, this current improvement is likely due to the short-term effects of resource discoveries and high world prices for the natural resources that the bottom billion export. For example, the star growth performer among all the economies of the bottom billion has been Equatorial Guinea. This is a small country of coups and corruption where offshore oil was recently discovered and now dominates income. In sum, even if we were to treat these recent figures as hopeful, which I think would be a misinterpretation, the growth of the bottom billion remains much slower at its peak than even the slowest period of growth in the rest of the developing world and brings them about back to where they were in 1970.

Think about what these two sets of growth rates imply. During the 1970s the bottom billion diverged in growth from the rest of the developing world by 2 percent a year. So even then the main feature of the societies in the bottom billion was divergence, not development. But the situation soon became alarmingly worse. During the 1980s the divergence accelerated to 4.4 percent a year, and during the 1990s it accelerated further to an astonishing 5 percent a year. Taking the three decades as a whole, the experience of the societies in the bottom billion was thus one of massive and accelerating divergence. Given the power of compound growth rates, these differences between the bottom billion and the rest of the developing world will rapidly cumulate into two different worlds. Indeed, the divergence has indeed already pushed most of the countries of the bottom billion to the lowest spot in the global pile.

It was not always that way. Before globalization gave huge opportunities to China and India, they were poorer than many of the countries that have been caught in the traps. But China and India broke free in time to penetrate global markets, whereas other countries that were initially less poor didn't. For the last two decades this has produced a growth pattern that appears confusing. Some initially poor countries are growing very well, and so it can easily look as if there is not really a problem: the bottom appears to be growing as fast as the rest. Over the next two decades the true nature of the problem is going to become apparent, however, because the countries that are trapped in stagnation or decline are now pretty well the poorest. The average person in the societies of the bottom billion now has an income only around one-fifth that of the typical person in the other developing countries, and the gap will just get worse with time. Picture this as a billion people stuck in a train that is slowly rolling backward downhill:

By 2050 the development gulf will no longer be between a rich billion in the most developed countries and five billion in the developing countries; rather, it will be between the trapped billion and the rest of humankind.

So far I have couched the problem of the bottom billion in terms of growth rates: these countries' growth rate has been negative in absolute terms, and in relative terms massively below that of the rest of the developing world. Nowadays, however, the talk is about poverty reduction and the other Millennium Development Goals, not about growth rates. Many of the people who care most about development feel more comfortable talking about goals such as getting girls into school than discussing growth. I share the enthusiasm for getting girls into school, and indeed for all the other goals. But I do not share the discomfort about growth. While I was directing the World Bank's research department, the most controversial paper we produced was one called "Growth Is Good for the Poor." Some NGOs hated it, and it was the only time in five years that Jim Wolfensohn, the Bank's president, phoned me to voice his concern. Yet the central problem of the bottom billion is that they have not grown. The failure of the growth process in these societies simply has to be our core concern, and curing it the core challenge of development. For policies in the rich world to become more supportive of growth in these societies, we will need the full lobbying power of those who care about the world's poor. And so the people who care will need to take another look at growth.

I am definitely not arguing that we should be indifferent to how an economy grows. The growth of Equatorial Guinea, for example, produces benefits for only a handful of its people, but this is exceptional; growth usually does benefit ordinary people. The exaggerated suspicion of growth by those who are concerned about development has manifested itself in the adjectives with which the word *growth* is now routinely encumbered. In strategy documents the word is now generally seen only in the context of the phrase "sustainable, pro-poor growth." Yet overwhelmingly, the problem of the bottom billion has not been that they have had the wrong *type* of growth, it is that they have not had *any* growth. The suspicion of growth has inadvertently undermined genuinely strategic thinking. I remember when one of the world's great experts on banking consulted me because he had been asked to advise one of the countries of the bottom billion. He was struggling to come up with evidence that banking reform would directly help the poorest people in the country, because he sensed that without such evidence his advice would be dismissed. The much stronger evidence that it would help the growth process would not be valued, he felt. Getting growth started in the bottom billion is going to be hard enough even without such hindrances.

We cannot make poverty history unless the countries of the bottom billion start to grow, and they will not grow by turning them into Cuba. Cuba is a stagnant, low-income, egalitarian country with good social services. If the bottom billion emulated Cuba, would this solve their problems? I think that the vast majority of the people living in the bottom billion—and indeed in Cuba—would see it as continued failure. To my mind, development is about giving hope to ordinary people that their children will live in a society that has caught up with the rest of the world. Take that hope away and the smart people will use their energies not to develop their society but to escape from it—as have a million Cubans. Catching up is about radically raising growth in the countries now at the bottom. The fact that stagnation has persisted over such a long period tells us that it is going to be difficult. What can we do beyond caring?

Beyond the Headless Heart: Accepting Complexity

The problem of the bottom billion is serious, but it is fixable. It is much less daunting than the dramatic problems that were overcome in the twentieth century: disease, fascism, and communism. But like most serious problems, it is complicated. Change is going to have to come from within the societies of the bottom billion, but our own policies could make these efforts more likely to succeed, and so more likely to be undertaken.

We will need a range of policy instruments to encourage the countries of the bottom billion to take steps toward change. To date we have used these instruments badly, so there is considerable scope for improvement. The main challenge is that these policy tools span various government agencies, which are not always inclined to cooperate. Traditionally, development has been assigned to aid agencies, which are low in almost every government's pecking order. The U.S. Department of Defense is not going to take advice from that country's Agency for International Development. The British Department of Trade and Industry is not going to listen to the

Department for International Development. To make development policy coherent will require what is termed a "whole-of-government" approach. To get this degree of coordination requires heads of government to focus on the problem. And because success depends on more than just what the United States or any other nation does on its own, it will require joint action across major governments.

The only forum where heads of the major governments routinely meet is the G8. Addressing the problem of the bottom billion is an ideal topic for the G8, but it means using the full range of available policies and so going beyond the Gleneagles agenda of 2005, which was a pledge to double aid programs. Africa is already back on the G8 agenda for the 2007 meeting in Germany. "Africa+" should rightly stay on the G8 agenda until the bottom billion are decisively freed from the development traps. This book sets out an agenda for the G8 that would be effective.