



THE FIRST MEETING OF THE COMMISSION FOR AFRICA, 4 MAY 2004:

PRESS NOTE

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, (Chairman) 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
Investing in People	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