

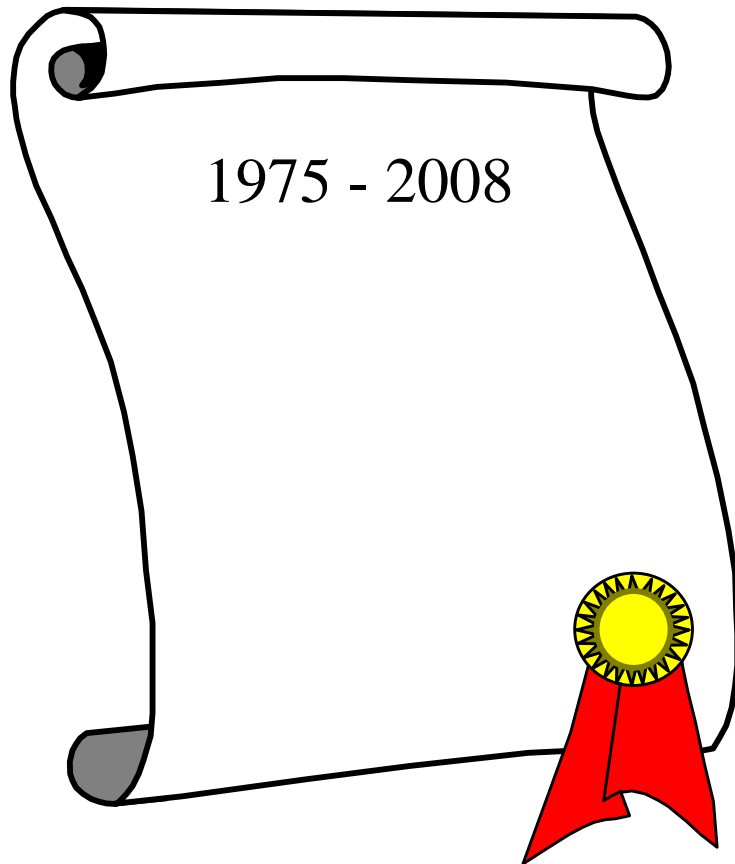
The importance of universities for a National Scientific Community

The Future of Research in Higher Education
IAU General Conference, Utrecht, July 2008

Berit Olsson
Director, SAREC



SAREC's mandate



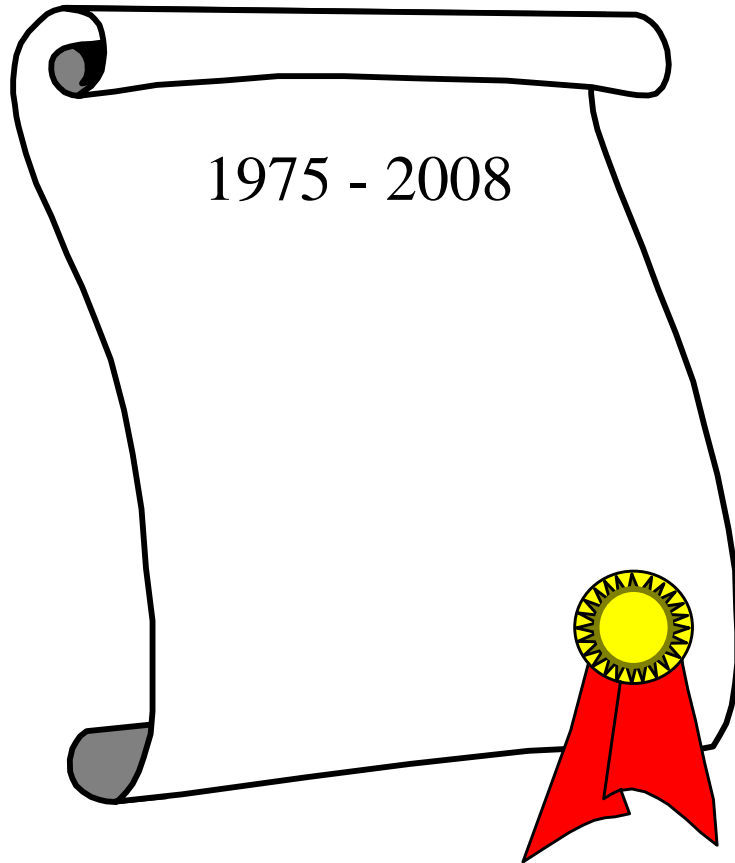
Assist developing countries in

- building national research capacity
- supporting their access to relevant research findings

Reluctance to support research in low income countries

- Other pressing priorities
- Basic needs
- Results and impact in distant future
- ”we can solve it for them”

SAREC's mandate



Assist developing countries in

- building national research capacity
 - *research in and by low income countries*
- supporting their access to relevant research findings
 - *research on and for development*

Why research?

- Can poor countries limit their ambition to using knowledge?
- Is it possible to identify , select and adapt new knowledge without an essential basis for research?

National Research Community

- Contact with international research
- Local analysis and advice
- Relevant research agenda
- Critical thinking in higher education
- Evidence based critique and debate
- Capacity for research training
- Stimulates innovation



New push for investing in R&D

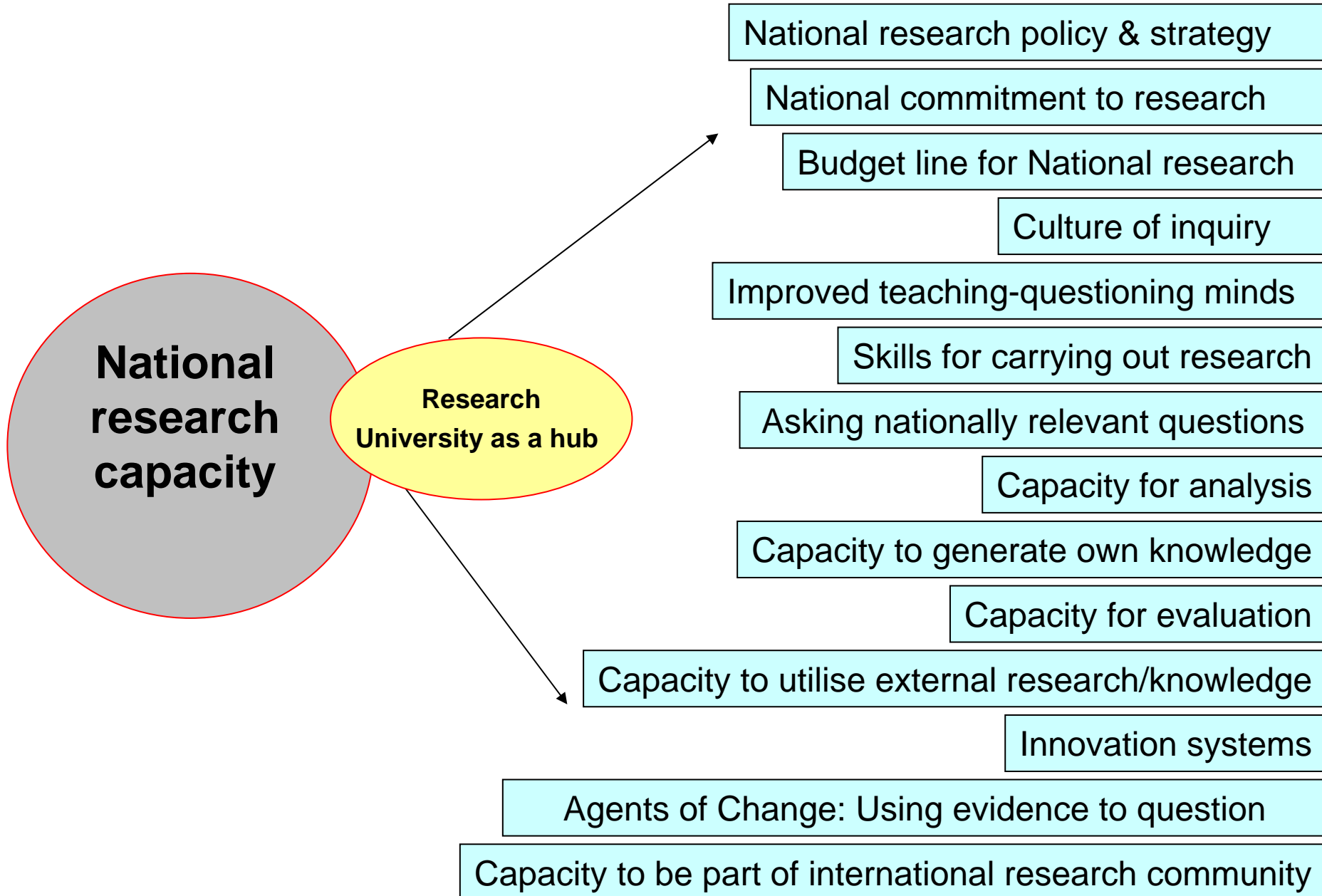
At the 8th summit of AU in January 2007

- African Heads of State pledged to spend 1% of GDP on research by 2010

Trends weakening chances of building a basis for research

- Dilution of resources for research

National Research capacity



Trends weakening chances of building a basis for research

- Dilution of resources for research
- Rapid expansion of higher education

Options in Higher Education

- Focusing resources into at least one research based university, with capacity for research training
- Other institutions of higher learning
- Professional training

External capacity efforts

- Agencies tend to offer individual scholarships for research training in our institutions
- Rather than target training efforts to enhance the capacity of partner institutions to develop their own capacity for research training

Options

- SAREC supports "sandwich" PhD training of academic staff
- Followed by support for local PhD capacity
- Ethiopia plans for "fast track" PhD using support from external faculties

Trends weakening chances of building a basis for research

- **Dilution** of resources for research
- Rapid expansion of higher education
- **Fragmentation** of efforts due to
 - push for immediate returns
 - application driven project funding
 - problem oriented research cooperation
 - vertical support programmes.

Research priorities

- A push for "useful research"

Useful knowledge?

- Pathways of migrating birds
- Mapping geological structures
- World religions

Useful knowledge?

- Pathways of migrating birds
- Avian flue
- Mapping geological structures
- Storage of nuclear waste
- World religions
- Conflicts

Research co-operation on global issues

- Interacts with and benefits from research activities at the national level
- Adds situated perspectives

Research co-operation on global issues

- Interacts with and benefits from research activities at the national level
- Adds situated perspectives
- Depends on partner country having a functioning basis for research –
- Does not automatically contribute to an institutional basis for research

Sustained capacity?

- The basis for research in low income countries will not be built or sustained merely through vertical programmes focussing on particular issues or problems.

UNESCO

Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge

Gathers research on systems

Develops template and indicators

Will collect and analyse experiences



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

National strategies for research

- Guide the organisation for research
- Guide the use of available resources
- Guide dialogue with external partners

National strategies for research

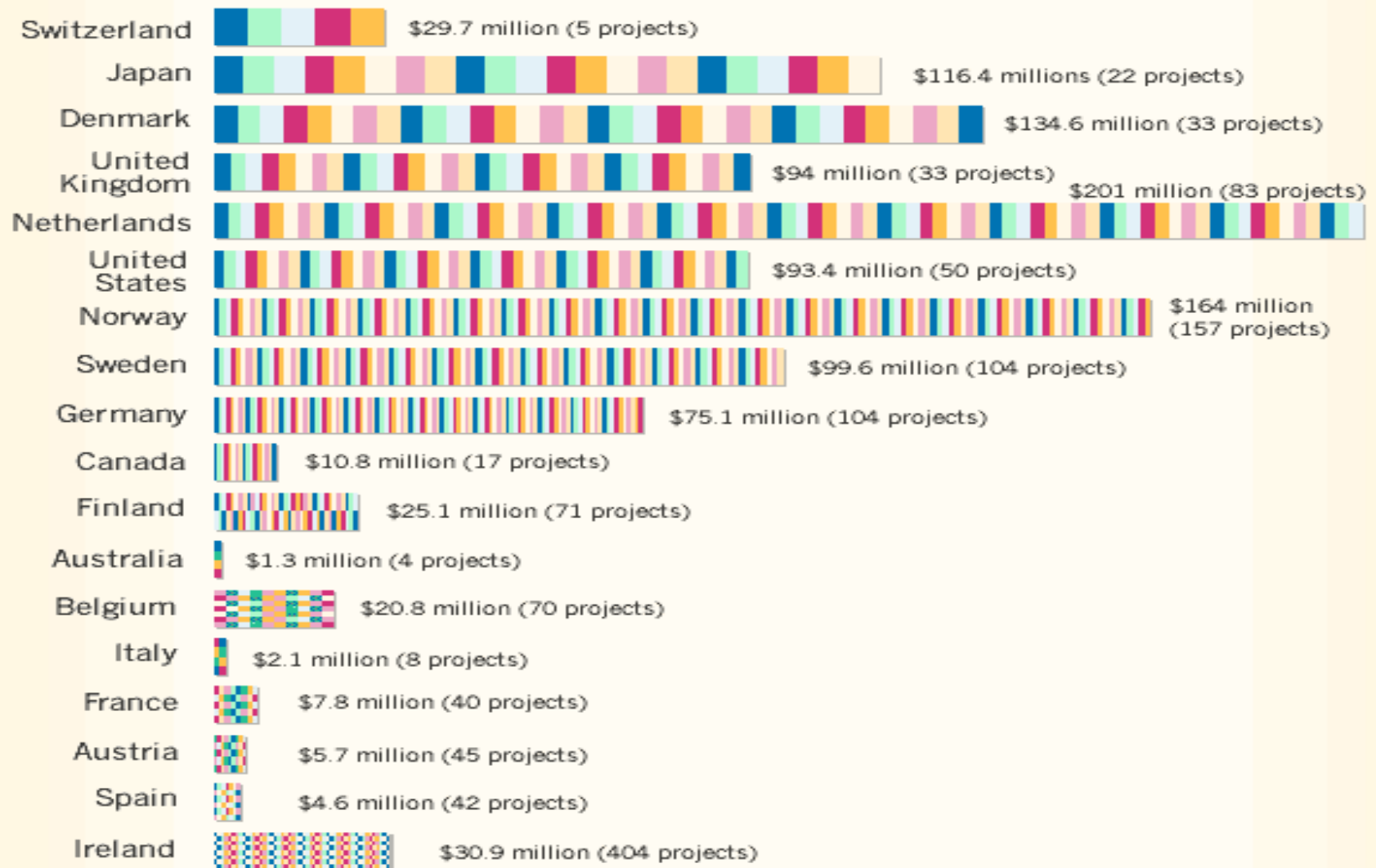
- Guide the organisation for research
- Guide the use of available resources
- Guide dialogue with external partners
- **Donors** can support a basis for research
- Align their support with plans
- Agree to harmonise reporting requirements

- *“If we are earnest in our ambitions of supporting developing countries, and in regarding them as equal partners, support for the development of their research community is an important ingredient of the Swedish development co-operation”.*

Thank You!

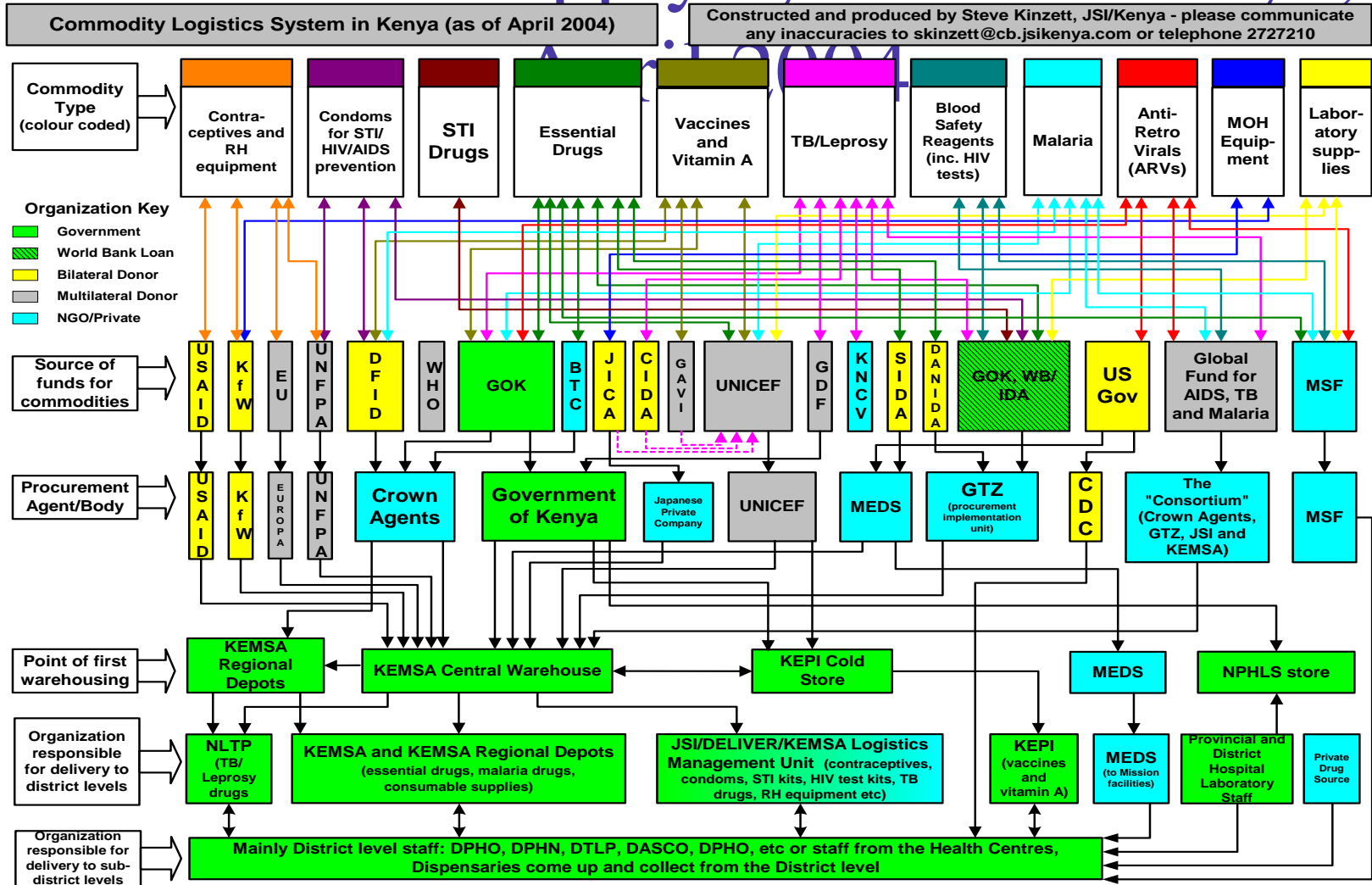


Bilateral Donor Support to



procurement and supply

Medicines supply system in Kenya,



Capacity impact

- Depends on the extent cooperation offers are aligned with research strategies and plans of the institution and on the degree of harmonisation with institutional practice

The “Paris Agenda”

From donorship to ownership

Ownership

Alignment

Harmonisation

African realities

- 340 million lack access to safe drinking water
- 500 million lack adequate sanitation
- energy from biomass, causes deforestation and health hazards
- two thirds of arable land affected by degradation
- rapid urbanization: environment problems, social unrest

Africa risks:

- millions more exposed to water stress
risk of conflicts
- sea-level rise affects large populations
- health impact, malaria increases
- threats to biodiversity?
- deforestation
- migration
- costs of adaptation and volatility

African Assets

NATURAL RESOURCES

- Potential for hydropower - only 7% utilized
- Oil, fastest growing sources. Minerals.
Biomass energy conversion capacity
- Solar potential enormous, geothermal and wind substantial
- Agriculture has potential to improve
- Economic potential of urbanization

Comission on Health Research for Development, 1990

- Children die from conditions which are preventable and may be cured using available knowledge
- However, lack of a national research community makes it difficult to find and apply existing cures

ENHR

- The commission coined the concept:
- Essential National Health Research, ENHR
- And recommended that
 - countries allocate 2% for research
 - aid agencies allocate 5% for research

Many health initiatives.....

- Global funds
- Global diseases
- Global research, but

Few fund research in low income countries