Global Civil society advocacy alliances and networks in the changing terrain of global governance and development: A critical inquiry into the politics and dynamics in crafting and operations of the Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP)

Submitted by Jacob Mwathi Mati
Student #: 0611914E
Contact: Email: jacobmati@gmail.com
Cell: 0766767243

Date Submitted: 18/02/2008

A thesis submitted to the School of Social Sciences, Faculty of Humanities of the University of the Witwatersrand in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Development Studies.

Research Supervisor: Dr. Noor Nieftagodien
ABSTRACT
The last few decades have witnessed the emergence of global civil society advocacy networks as major players in global governance. This research aimed at using a case study of GCAP in critically analysing the politics and dynamics of crafting a global civil society advocacy alliance. Specifically, the study aimed to: a) identify, analyse, and document GCAP’s experiences, strategies and challenges in trans-national networking and advocacy; b) generate knowledge on recent developments in global civil society networking and advocacy.

The study analyses the study phenomenon using two central features of GCAP: networking and advocacy. Chapter one attempts to give a background of the study and also discusses the methods used. Chapter two lays the theoretical framework and operationalises the concepts explored in the study. The report argues that alliances are very different from ‘normal’ forms of organisations because they are made up of diverse forms of organisations, coming together voluntarily to achieve a specific purpose. They are therefore, by their very nature, complex, unstable, and difficult to co-ordinate. Chapters Three and Four look at such intricacies and complexities of crafting and operations of global advocacy networks. I conclude this research arguing that despite challenges in alliances building and operations, global civil society organisations will still need to network if they are to remain relevant and effective in current global governance context. It is only in their unity that they will be able to confront their common challenges.
DECLARATION
I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts in Development Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.

Jacob Mwathi Mati

20th day of August, 2008.
DEDICATION

This Thesis is dedicated to the millions of the poor, and the relentless activists who selflessly and graciously, advocate on their behalf in the hope and belief that a just world is possible. Let the ideals of a better life for all, and especially for those who have been recipients of great injustices throughout history, come to pass.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In life, sometimes, one does things that have a profound impact on them. Such happened to me in October 2006. TROCAIRE (an Irish non-governmental organisation (NGO) and Abantu for Development (a Nairobi based Pan-African civil society organisation invited me to a conference named ‘The Leading Edge NGOs in the Next Decade.’ In the invitation, they asked me to reflect on ‘Building Civil Society Alliances and Networks.’ The basic research I did to prepare for this reflection led me to have greater interests on a phenomenon that has so much promise in making an impact on the global governance processes. When I enrolled for my MA in Development Studies at Wits, these interests were further nurtured.

This nurturing has benefited from many people some of whom require special thanks and mention. I would like to first and foremost, thank my supervisor Dr. Noor Nieftagodien for all the guidance, patience and challenging comments throughout this project. Your support went a long way in making me a better researcher. Secondly, I would like to thank Dr. Michelle Williams (Wits Department of Sociology) for those critical comments that enabled me develop the proposal for this research. To Dr. Kumai Naidoo, the CEO of CIVICUS, I am grateful for the comments and interview sessions that you offered at the initial and later stages of this study and for ‘connecting’ me to all those people in GCAP. My colleagues at work: Wolfgang Dorner, Carla Suarez, thank you for the initial brainstorms and comments at the beginning of this project.

This project would not have succeeded without the support of Patricia Kyungu, my love. You have been a wonderful companion, best friend, and support throughout this journey. To my parents: Abraham Mati and Celina Mati, and siblings; your love and constant encouragement have gone a long way in giving me the extra energy.

I would also like to thank all the participants in this study for their time and efforts in helping me get the data. Special thanks to Elizabeth Kariba and Peter Phiri for making time to proofread last draft of this thesis. As the work is mine, I take responsibility for any errors and positions I have taken in this thesis.

Last but not least, thanks to the Wits Postgraduate Merit Award scholarship for making my life at Wits a little more comfortable.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**ABSTRACT** ........................................................................................................... 1  
**DECLARATION** ..................................................................................................... 2  
**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** ......................................................................................... 4

I. INTRODUCTION AND STUDY BACKGROUND ............................................... 7  
1. INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................... 7  
1.1. STUDY BACKGROUND ...................................................................................... 8  
1.1.1. Global Civil Society in Global Governance ...................................................... 8  
1.1.2. Study Aims ..................................................................................................... 9  
1.1.3. Study Rationale ............................................................................................ 10  
1.1.4. Why GCAP? ................................................................................................. 10  
1.2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ........................................................................... 12  
1.2.1. The Research Design .................................................................................... 12  
1.2.2. The Approach ............................................................................................... 12  
1.2.3. Methods of collecting data ............................................................................ 13  
A) In-depth Key informant Interviews ....................................................................... 14  
   i) Instrument of Data collection ............................................................................ 14  
   ii) The Study Site and Sampling Criteria ............................................................... 15  
B) Observations ....................................................................................................... 16  
C) Document Analysis ............................................................................................. 16  
D) Literature review ................................................................................................. 17  
1.2.4. Methods of Data Analysis ............................................................................ 17  
1.3. STUDY LIMITATION ......................................................................................... 18  
1.4. CONCLUSION AND STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT ..................................... 19

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ......................... 21  
2.0. INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................. 21  
2.1. DEFINITIONS AND DISCUSSION OF KEY TERMS AND CONCEPT ............. 21  
A) Civil Society ......................................................................................................... 21  
B) Global Civil Society .............................................................................................. 25  
C) The Transformation of Civil Society into Global Civil Society ......................... 27  
D) Towards an Operational Definition of Global Civil Society ............................. 28  
E) Global Civil Society Advocacy in International Governance Process ............ 30  
F) Trans-National Networking and Alliance Building in Global Civil Society Advocacy ....................................................................................................................... 31  
2.2 PROBLEMATISING GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY ADVOCACY NETWORKS ....... 36  
2.3 CONCLUSION ..................................................................................................... 40

III. A CARTOGRAPHY OF A GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY ADVOCACY ALLIANCE .... 41  
3.0. INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................. 41  
3.1. THE FIRST LIGHTS: THE ORIGINS AND EVOLUTION OF GCAP ............... 41  
3.2. FACTORS FOR GCAP’S FORMATION ................................................................ 44  
3.3. GCAP’S EVOLUTION ......................................................................................... 54  
3.4. GCAP’S ARCHITECTURE ................................................................................. 58  
3.5. CONCLUSION ..................................................................................................... 67

IV. THE POLITICS AND DYNAMICS OF CRAFTING GCAP ............................... 69  
4.0 INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................... 69