*Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development* 2025, 9(4), 11654.
https://doi.org/10.24294/jipd11654

Article

# Planning diplomacy: A remedy to ugly aid dependency and contributor to sustainable development in Africa

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**CITATION**

Niyitunga EB, Jahed MI. (2025). Planning diplomacy: A remedy to ugly aid dependency and contributor to sustainable development in Africa. Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development. 9(4): 11654. https://doi.org/10.24294/jipd11654

**ARTICLE INFO**

Received: 3 April 2025
Accepted: 26 May 2025
Available online: 11 November 2025



**Abstract:** The effects of aid dependency on preventing the achievement of sustainable development in Africa have not been given appropriate academic attention. Aid dependency in Africa is undoubtedly among the most factors that have promoted poverty and underdevelopment. Aid dependency which hindered the growth of local innovation, promoted divisions that have affected good governance for sustainable development. Aid dependency has promoted chronic poverty, mental laziness and unstable health and well-being. It has ignited unhealthy conditions that have created a perpetual vicious cycle of poverty that prevents the achievement of sustainable development. The study found that planning diplomacy can serve as a solution to aid diplomacy and address its effects thus promoting the achievement of sustainable development. Planning diplomacy was found to have critical links with Africa's communalism theory, thus making it an ideal approach to addressing the effects of aid dependency in Africa. Planning diplomacy was found to promote local business in a collective manner. It is through this collective approach that sustainable development can be achieved in Africa. Planning diplomacy was found to be key for sustainable development because it makes good use of foreign aid and promotes local ownership, thus strengthening sustainable economic growth and development that makes sustainable development achievable. Planning diplomacy was equally important as a remedy to aid dependency because it enhances knowledge and skills transfer. Knowledge and skills transfer promotes sustainable development because it facilitates sharing of skills that brings innovation and technologies to local citizens in a collective manner. The study adopted a qualitative research methodology with the use of secondary data collected from existing literature published in the public domain. Collected data was analyzed and interpreted through document analysis techniques.

**Keywords:** planning diplomacy; aid dependency; sustainable development; Africa

## 1. Introduction

Sustainable development being development for the current generation to achieve their basic needs and fundamental rights without jeopardizing the ability of the future generation to achieve theirs depends on the nature of planning diplomacy (Niyitunga and Musya, 2024). Staying in a world that suffers from resource scarcity, developed countries understood the role of planning diplomacy as a guide within their foreign policy to enable them to negotiate for resources that help achieve sustainable development. However, in the global south, particularly in African countries, the lack of planning diplomacy has not only prevented them from achieving sustainable development but also prevented them from overcoming the dependency syndrome, which has been a setback towards achieving sustainable development.

The aid dependency results from mismanagement and misuse of foreign aid that influence a culture of aid dependency in the receiving country. It refers to an attitude and belief that a community or country is unable to solve its own problems without foreign aid or assistance emanating from outside. In this case, it means the lazy attitude and dependent feeling that make many African states view foreign aid as the only way towards achieving sustainable development. However, the history of foreign aid in Africa disproves this feeling because a half-century has erupted in Africa depending on the foreign aid, and yet no sustainable development has been achieved. There has been no political stability or industrialization growth that has been achieved that would make the path towards sustainable development possible.

From sustainable development perspective, the dependency syndrome has been understood as situation where countries become overly reliant on foreign aids or funds for the development projects. The reliance makes those countries fall into a trap of cycle of dependence and chronic poverty become their own capacity for self-reliance and innovations have been undermined. This situation thwarts any efforts towards achieving sustainable development because it demotivates people from taking ownership of their development projects as well as funding them. Aid dependency undermines local innovation, initiatives, entrepreneurship, and the development of sustainable livelihoods. It also makes local people vulnerable to exploitation by external actors and donors thus exacerbating chronic poverty and underdevelopment which then hinder the achievement of sustainable development.

Planning diplomacy, being a strategic and methodical preparation and execution of diplomatic activities within foreign policy endeavors, encompasses the setting of priorities, development of strategies, and allocation of resources with the aim to achieve sustainable development. Planning diplomacy involves the act of defining the overall objectives and long-term goals of a state's foreign policy in the search of resources that would influence the achievement of sustainable development. It identifies the diplomatic tools and strategies needed to achieve those resources as well as the diplomatic tools and strategies to distribute and allocate them. This study makes two novel contributions with respect to the previous literature, which has mainly focused on the role of foreign aid on economic growth and development in the receiving countries. First, the study found that aid dependency poses threats to development objectives in Africa as it promotes laziness, weakens government institutions, promotes divisions and corruption, and prevents the achievement of economic growth and development. Second, the study found that planning diplomacy is a remedy to aid dependency because it addresses effects caused by aid dependency on sustainable development because it promotes local business and activities that enable the achievement of sustainable economic growth and development. It promotes local ownership, thus promoting good governance, a governance controlled and held by the people and for the people, and promotes knowledge and technological transfer through diplomatic negotiations abroad with like-minded stakeholders.

The aim of this study is to explain the role of planning diplomacy in mitigating aid dependency in order to achieve sustainable development in Africa. The research question the study seeks to answer is, to what extent can planning diplomacy serve as a remedy for aid dependency and a significant contributor to sustainable development in Africa? To achieve the aim and answer the research question, the study is divided into six main sections. While the first section provided an introduction, the second section explained the research methodology and the research techniques used to collect and analyze data used in this paper. The third section explains what planning diplomacy is about and the nature and characteristics of planning diplomacy. The section also explains the links between planning diplomacy and Africa's communalism. The fourth section explains aid dependency and its effects on communalism as well as on sustainable development. The fifth section assesses the role of planning diplomacy in promoting sustainable development. The sixth section consists of concluding remarks of this study.

## 2. Research methodology

The study adopted a qualitative research methodology with secondary data collected from the literature and used documentary analysis techniques to validate facts stated in the study. A qualitative method was used to reveal possible effects of the aid dependency on sustainable development. It was also selected to understand the role of planning diplomacy in sustainable development and describe and interpret phenomena surrounding foreign aid in Africa. As Oranga (2023) said, qualitative was used because the study aimed to gather non-numerical data that helped to understand the experiences of the people in situations of aid dependency caused by foreign aid and how they respond to the effects caused by aid dependency on their lives. Qualitative methodology further helped to get insights into people's experiences, behavior, beliefs, attitudes, and motivation (Oranga, 2023). It helped explore and provide deeper insights into the real-world of problems (Moser and Korsrjens, 2018). The use of this methodology enabled the collection of data that clearly clarified the real effects of aid dependency on sustainable development, as well as the role of planning diplomacy in addressing those effects to achieve sustainable development in Africa.

The data collected were sufficient to understand the role of planning diplomacy in addressing the effects and impacts of aid dependency on sustainable development. The data collected also helped to understand the contributions of planning diplomacy in promoting the realization of sustainable development in Africa. This understanding enabled the researcher to construct relevant findings that led to relevant conclusions and practical recommendations for this study. This study involved a systematic literature review to obtain relevant secondary data. Criteria used to select those readings for review were the year of publication, the methodology used in them, the type of journals that published the articles, the type of conferences, and the publishers that published those sources. Reading materials that were included in the review were those published between 2010 and 2024, although to trace the history, some sources involved information taken from sources older than 2010. The sources included qualitative research journals that helped to understand the extent to which planning diplomacy can address the effects of dependency syndrome and pave ways towards achieving sustainable development in Africa.

Furthermore, secondary data were collected from local and global sources of documents, which included sustainable development, foreign aid, aid dependency, conference reports on poverty, underdevelopment, and economic growth in Africa, and numerous studies related to dependency and Africa's communalism theories. Besides, literature on the effects of foreign aid conditionality and the continuation of imperialism in Africa was reviewed. In-depth analytic reading and review of the literature on aid dependency and sustainable development were done. Collected data was analyzed and interpreted through document analysis techniques. Numerous statements of facts were extracted to validate the aim and the research question of the study. Document analysis, being a systematic procedure for reviewing printed and online documents (Bowen, 2009), helped to capture meaning from the texts. Variables investigated included foreign aid, aid dependency, sustainable development, imperialism, planning diplomacy, and poverty and underdevelopment. These variables were significant for one to understand the effects of aid dependency on sustainable development and the role of planning diplomacy in mitigating those effects and setting a strong path towards sustainable development. Therefore, variables were crucial in understanding the effects of aid dependency and the role of planning diplomacy in addressing those effects.

## 3. Planning diplomacy explained

Alternatively referred to as strategic diplomacy, planning diplomacy describes the calculated approach that states use to formulate and propagate their long-term development objectives. It encompasses cultivation of strategic partnerships, intensive and extensive cost-benefit analysis, capacity building, pursuing of joint economic and infrastructural ventures, knowledge transfer, and mechanisms of advancing national interests. Burton (2010) sees planning diplomacy as instrumental in the new age of diplomacy that is rooted in objectivity and rationality. Burton (2010) further argued that planning diplomacy requires policymakers to utilize planning skills and approaches to arrive at deliberations that assure the state of enduring economic and security benefits. From the above understanding, this study understands planning diplomacy as an effort by the state officials that involves dialogue on planning to achieve economic growth and development and uses any approaches to make those plans lead to sustainable economic development that promotes the achievement of sustainable development.

### 3.1. Nature of planning diplomacy

Touted as the beating heart of economic development planning, planning diplomacy transcends the mere adoption of the provisions of traditional diplomacy. It is a cocktail of strategic approaches that bolster sustainable economic development through intensified state cooperation and collaboration (Prantl and Goh, 2022). Planning diplomacy has a largely multilateral approach to sustainable development and poverty reduction. Planning diplomacy brings the ability to achieve sustainable development because it brings diverse actors such as states, civil societies, private entities, and academia into the effort to foster the achievement of sustainable development. Planning diplomacy is also characterized by its emphasis on establishing strategic partnerships. These arrangements may come in the form of joint research and development initiatives, cooperation deals, and investment opportunities. By tapping into this aspect of planning diplomacy, states use their local resources to foster their ambitions towards achieving sustainable development without waiting for foreign aid.

For this reason, it addresses aid dependency, planning diplomacy also enables local to use their innovative ability and expertise and resources to boost their development plans towards achieving sustainable development without depending solely on foreign aids. Cognizant of the importance of a stable and secure future, planning diplomacy earnestly advocates for long-term visions that range from several years to decades. It therefore calls on the public and leaders to prudently and equitably use their resources and conserve the environment at all costs, as these are the bedrock of a sustainable future. Moreover, the concept is also holistic in nature. Prantl (2022) argued that planning diplomacy promotes interconnection of vital sectors such as education, infrastructure, trade, environment, and investment that lead to sustainable development. Prantl (2022) further noted that capacity building which plays a key role in sustainable development result from planning diplomacy.

Planning diplomacy used properly fosters technical expertise, human capital and institutional capabilities. As such, it often discourages any aid dependency and enhances sustainable development by investing in knowledge transfer programs, institutional reform and training initiatives that ultimately yield administrative efficiency. Prantl (2022) opined that planning diplomacy often lays out long-term development objectives and allows for flexibility as the international system is an ever-evolving sphere. Using planning diplomacy would enable states accustomed to foreign aid to realize that it offers prevailing opportunities for sustainable development. Planning diplomacy similarly enacts risk management measures to cushion states from future uncertainties and adversities such as natural disasters, recessions, and geopolitical risks.

## 3.2. Links between planning diplomacy and Africa's communalism

Theoretically, planning diplomacy's provisions perfectly align with Africa's communalism theory which advocates for collective efforts based on shared values. In this paper, communalism is understood as emphasis on the primacy of the community over the individual (Oguejiofor, 2006). Communalism is an ideological, organisational and relational system that empowers the community to determine the needs of the community. Nnaemeka (2023) argued that African communalism commends the collective responsibility of the African people and advocates for their unity. This means that communalism theory unites people together and puts them at the center of their being in community. The theory further ensures that people see and view sustainable development as a collective endeavor and reiterates the role of community in achieving sustainable development.

The application of this theory to planning diplomacy would enable people to come together to promote collective programs that strengthen innovations. Communalism theory advocates for a collective approach to peacebuilding in the community. It enables development practitioners, citizens, and political elites to use planning diplomacy to plan for development projects for sustainable development. Through planning diplomacy, communalism equips people with communal dialogue that enhances collective knowledge and innovative skills through training and exchange initiatives. This emphasis on the provision of social mobility and wholesome growth embodies the liberalist ideals of self-determination and individual empowerment. In line with sustainable development, communalism theory applied to planning diplomacy promotes free trade agreements and facilitates easy transfer of capital, goods, and services across various frontiers. Communalism believes in the rule of law, and linked to planning, diplomacy strengthens institutions and makes them pathways for achieving sustainable development. It has been noted that communalism regulates human relations (Odimegwu and Omazu, 2021). One can note that communalism makes societies models of egalitarianism devoid of classes, which is an ingredient of sustainable development. It establishes association of members on the basis of equality and fraternity, which would enable collective planning efforts that lead to the achievement of sustainable development collectively. In communalism, the exercise of political power is not based on coercion but on cooperation of members, and decision-making processes are based on consensus (Odimegwu and Omazu, 2021).

At the economic level which informs the achievement of economic growth and development, communalism insists on the egalitarian welfare of members in community. For example, land is reputed the most powerful piece of property in communal African societies and so is owned in common by all community members (Odimegwu and Omazu, 2021). The idea here is to ensure there is equitable distribution to members of society as their needs and ability demand (Odimegwu and Omazu, 2021). African communalism recognizes the poor and does not abandon them to their fate and were always offered communal leverage necessary to succeed in the community (Odimegwu and Omazu, 2021). This means that communalism is devoid of classes and class divisions which thus makes it possible to promote sustainable development in Africa. This also ensured that inherent struggle occasioned by the economic gap between the rich and the poor in the Western world was never witnessed in traditional Africa. Planning diplomacy therefore contributes to sustainable development because it creates an enabling environment that linked to communalism would ultimately enhance communal values such as justice, accountability and equality. Planning diplomacy is linked to communalism and would further lead to inclusive measures that support democratic reforms and thus influencing an independent environment that fosters sustainable development in Africa.

## 4. Aid dependency: A threat sustainable development in Africa

The literature on international development and international relations shows less on the effects of aid dependency on sustainable development. Aid dependency has resulted from foreign aid that emanated from the developed countries. These foreign aids have promoted aid dependency, which translated into an attitude of dependency syndrome. Its definition and effects on development projects and initiatives that promote sustainable development in Africa have remained unnoticed as well as rarely analyzed. In this study, aid dependency is understood as an attitude in the people that entrenches a culture of always relying on external aids/loans thus preventing their ability to become independent and self-sufficient in addressing their basic needs. This culture has a detrimental effect on the people’s integrity, innovation, and creativity, as well as their ability to have something done without resorting to external assistance. Aid dependency is entrenched by the actions of receiving foreign aid from outside with conditions that contrast local efforts towards development approaches (Niyitunga and Musya, 2024). Scholars have noted that aid dependency undermines people's initiative; local innovation, and deteriorates independent thinking capacity, self-sufficiency, self-reliance and sustainability (Niyitunga and Musya, 2024).

### 4.1. Aid dependency promotes mental laziness

The first finding of this study showed that aid dependency is mental laziness, which affects any efforts towards sustainable development in Africa. Broadly speaking, dependency syndrome is a threat to sustainable development as well as to mental growth and/or human development. Foreign aid creates a dependency mentality or syndrome, in which people expect continued dependence on outside assistance. This dependence undermines efforts and initiative at both individual, community, and national levels. The relief experienced from foreign aid, on the other hand, undermines local economies and innovations and creates a culture of laziness and the feeling of needing to continue relying on outside assistance. This therefore threatens any move towards sustainable development because it traps people into chronic dependency on foreign aid. The attitude of depending on foreign aid is one of the root causes of mental disability and prevents one's creativity, promotes defeat of development projects, and leads to extreme poverty.

Ouattara (2006) indicated that in Africa, aid dependence has affected the fiscal aggregates, thus promoting poverty. Aid dependence makes a country unable to deliver key functions of government, like operations and basic public services, without foreign aid funding as well as expertise. Foreign aid has impoverished many African countries, and some regions have become incapable of initiating development projects for economic growth without foreign assistance. Aid dependency in African countries not only increases dependency syndrome attitudes but also compromises the ability to initiate independent development projects that would promote the achievement of sustainable development.

### 4.2. Aids dependency promotes chronic poverty

The second finding of this study presented that aid dependency promotes chronic poverty, thus deepening underdevelopment in Africa. Literature reviewed indicated that there is a close relationship between foreign aid and poverty (Wamboye et al., 2014). Once people have become accustomed to receiving aid, whether free or conditioned promotes debt burden, which in turn hinders any advancement of development projects that would lead to sustainable development (ActionAid et al., 2004). Foreign aid has been noted to have led to debt traps, which have suppressed economic growth, thus hindering the achievement of sustainable development. However, foreign aid used properly under a good, collective, and inclusive governance would promote economic development and growth. One can see that for those aids to promote social changes that influence the ability to achieve development must be used properly, and the receiving country must have a responsible government that follows the rule of law.

In the case of African countries, that has not been the case; these foreign aids have been setbacks as far as the endeavors of achieving sustainable development are concerned. These foreign aids have rather been delivered to countries suffering from bad governance; hence, the results have been the promotion of corruption, destruction of local industries, deepening of poverty, and widening of the gap between rich and poor citizens. These aids weakened the governance institutions, promoted corruption and mismanagement of resources, and discouraged the growth of innovations and industries. They have also influenced the continuation of colonialism (neo-colonialism) and promoted development and economic dependency, thus hindering long-term development projects that would lead to sustainable development. The study thus argues that foreign aid is in the long run ineffective, as its negative effects on development outweigh its positive effects.

It can be noted that aid dependency, where countries only rely on foreign aid for their government spending, undermines development because it weakens accountability, encourages corruption, and hinders long-term planning and policy autonomy. The impact of foreign aid in donor and recipient countries is largely unsettled in theory and data analysis, and this is because of the various arguments for and against the benefits of foreign aid (Khan and Ahmed, 2007). Many economists mistakenly believe that foreign aid is synonymous with economic growth because it complements and supplements national resources as well as provides additional financial resources, which assist in ameliorating a country's economy and political environment (Khan and Ahmed, 2007). On the contrary, others argue that foreign aid can replace national savings and also promote aid dependency, which in turn hinders economic and investment growth (Khan and Ahmed, 2007).

## 4.3. Aid dependency promotes corruption and undermines governance

The third finding of this study presented that aid dependency promotes corruption and undermines governance in Africa, and yet achieving sustainable development depends on good governance. Foreign aid that entrenches a culture of aid dependency promotes a culture of aid dependency, or dependency syndrome, which affects the realization of development objectives and projects that would lead to sustainable development. Foreign aid is a threat to development because it promotes dependency syndrome and aid dependency attitudes (Khan and Ahmed, 2007). Foreign aid has also served as a side source of income to political elites, and these elites have ensured their dominance of the political and economic scene to avoid losing their side source of income (Khan and Ahmed, 2007). This is so, particularly in Africa, where foreign aid has been used to foster the interests of the influential elites instead of being used to develop the economy and promote the rule of law and democratic governance (Izobo, 2007).

It has been thus indicated that foreign aid in Africa encourages corruption, highly inefficient and ineffective governments, hinders economic and investment growth, stalls democracy and the respect for the rule of law, and unstable economic policies (Izobo, 2007). As much as scholars from the Western Hemisphere have argued that foreign aid is a vital source of financial resources and holds the potential to play an important role in the promotion of sustainable development, rule of law, and democratic governance in Africa, however, the abovementioned facts prove their arguments incorrect. In Africa, the reception of foreign aid deteriorates democratic governance, and yet the level of democracy is highly associated with the quality of governance. This means that foreign aid impedes the achievement of sustainable development because if democracy that enables all citizens to actively participate is affected, making them unable to better their lives.

Through foreign aid, which led to aid dependence, there has been a rise in political instability and civil wars, ballooning debt, and coup d'états that are occurring in Africa result of foreign aid. This is because foreign aid not only led to aid dependence but also afforded African countries the financial means to carry out the aforementioned atrocities (Brautigm and Knack, 2004, p. 255). The occurrence of those atrocities has made the continent ungovernable and affected the growth of the economy and development, thus intensifying chronic poverty. Erbeznik (2011, pp. 885–886) argued that foreign aid destroys the quality of governance, affects the rule of law, promotes corruption, and installs corrupt leaders as a tool for power. Corrupt leaders lack the integrity and sincerity to use the received foreign funds to reform institutions and deliver the funds to support development projects. These leaders become dictators in order to remain in power, continue accessing the funds, gain control over them, and enrich themselves and their relatives.

Knack (2004, p. 253) noted that foreign aids have intensified coup d'états that have accumulated into political instability because those aids in the receiving countries undermines rule of law and democratic governance. Due to aid dependency, political elites in Africa have less or no motivation for promoting sustainable development because they use foreign aid for their salary increments, luxurious vehicles and houses that hinder any move towards sustainable economic growth and development (Erbeznik, 2011, p.886). Therefore, the endeavours towards rule of law and development reforms are prevented and as result poverty cycle becomes unavoidable.

Knack (2004, p.311) indicated that foreign aid increases corruption as many African leaders divert foreign aids to their private foreign bank accounts. These leaders also use foreign aid to fund projects specifically for the political elites (Knack, 2004, p. 311). Erbeznik (2011, p. 887) argued that empirical analysis shows that countries that receive more foreign funds experience higher levels of corruption and unemployment rates. Brautigm and Stephen Knack (2011, pp. 360–361) noted that the reception of foreign aid block rule of law reforms and good governance because conditions associated with those funds can cripple institutions rather than improve them. For example, Somalia and Democratic Republic of Congo which have received much of the foreign funds have remained in chronic poverty making them the poorest countries in world politics (Anoba, 2017). The same funds have bestowed to countries like South Sudan, Libya and Mozambique but have been experiencing cycles of political instability which have led to civil wars thus blocking development initiatives that would have promoted sustainable development. One can see that foreign aids have tremendous effects of the governance in the receiving countries, and cannot either improve it.

### 4.4. Aid dependency affects economic growth and development

The fourth finding of this study indicated that aid dependency disburssed in Africa affect the acheivemnt of sustainable economic growth and development thus prevents the realisation of sustainable development in Africa. While achieving economic growth leads to the achievement of sustainable development, in Africa this achievement has been hindered by the provision of foreign aids. Mauro (2007) argued that foreign aids increase corruption levels, which directly lowers economic growth. Jia (2019) noted that foreign aid has negative effects on economic growth. This means that foreign aids prevent the growth of any business that would lead to economic growth. Moreover, Bartenev (2023) indicated that foreign aid poses threats to Foreign Direct Investments (FDI). Moyo (2009) argued that foreign aids undermine recipient country's sovereignty and autonomy, exacerbate inequalities, and distort local priorities, thus preventing economic growth. Fitriani (2024) argued further that conditions that come with foreign aids lead to policy incoherence and undermine the effectiveness of those foreign aids to lead to sustainable development because funds or resources are diverted the essential development projects.

Fritriani (2024) and Niyitunga and Musya (2024) further showed that foreign aid inadvertently exacerbates governance challenges and perpetuates cycles of dependence instead of catalyzing long-term development. It has been noted that weak governance structures characterized by corruption, political instability, and lack of accountability can undermine the impact of foreign aid and perpetuate cycles of dependency (Mavrotas and Ouattara, 2010). Foreign aid leads to the death of local industries in the receiving countries. Foreign aid kills local industries in developing countries and enhances chronic poverty. Moreover, these aids affect the manufacturing of local goods and thus influence high rates of unemployment. One can note that the existence of industries increases the production of services and goods, which results in increasing employment rates that boost the living conditions of local citizens and their livelihoods. This is because local industries have been the engine of economic growth. Moreover, the industrial sector empowers and transforms sluggish recovery into an economic resurgence. As Balami (2006) noted, economic growth is an increase in the output of an economy's capacity to produce goods and services needed to improve the welfare of the country's citizens. This means that economic growth depends on the growth of local industries.

## 4.5. Aid dependency: A barrier to sustainable development in Africa

The fifth finding of this study indicated that aid dependency hinders and/or is a critical barrier to achieving sustainable development. It is not surprising that such attitudes can also be encountered elsewhere in the developing world and fuel the so-called lingering 'dependency theory, which posits a North–South relationship in which the North maintains the South in a dependency status so as to exploit the latter as a cheap source of raw materials and labor. In this era of the post-Cold War era, the delivery of foreign aid has intensified imperialism, promoting debt traps and thus promoting aid dependency. Development appears stillborn, and the nation depends heavily on foreign manufactured goods and even agricultural produce to maintain the perquisites of a small élite. This modest degree ofrial well-being is purchased at the price of a steady export of renewable and non-renewable resources.

Dependency theorists suggest that a condition of dependency syndrome has been manipulated and effected by the Northern hemisphere countries to halt development pathways of the countries in the global South. One can argue that countries in the

North through multinationals and industrial powers enter into joint ventures and other various types of partnership to effect relatively foreign aid that keep countries in the global South in the periphery thus remaining poor. In doing so, the exploiting groups obtain guarantees of cooperation in their own ventures thereby reducing the risk of radical political measures being taken against them. This thus promotes chronic poverty and underdevelopment in Africa, hence hindering any development projects that would lead to sustainable development. It has led to a creation of laziness that prevented any homegrown policies that would promote development (Niyitunga and Musya, 2024). As Alghamdi (2016) noted, the continent's inability to attain self-sufficiency has emboldened wealthy European and Asian nations to continue their quest to satisfy the continent's seemingly insatiable appetite for external economic and humanitarian support unabated.

Similarly, voluminous literature has villainized foreign aid, faulting it for underdevelopment and the current debt burden that plagues the continent. This can be attributed to the lack of planning diplomacy as it would have led to the promotion of self-sufficiency through sustainable economic development, thus achieve sustainable development. In Africa, the lack of an elaborate action plan to reduce dependency continues to prevail as despite the heaping of blame on their predecessors, the current economic woes seem to have no end in sight as the current government continues to heavily rely on agricultural exports and borrowing for sustenance. It is obvious that planning diplomacy is a remedy because it bolsters sustainable economic development and reducing dependency in Africa.

## 4.6. Aid dependency promotes resources exploitation in Africa

The sixth finding of this study revealed that aid dependency poses its ugly faces of resource allocation and promotes resource exploitation. It is undeniable to argue that aid dependency promotes resource exploitation in Africa. Developing countries are often seen as suppliers of raw materials and cheap labor, while developed countries control the markets for manufactured goods, leading to an unequal exchange of resources and wealth. Niyonkuru (2016) states that it decreases returns as it is mostly heavily influenced by external conditions, and also, its relevance in the overall economic growth depends upon the nature and performance of political institutions in place. Pycroft and Pedro (2009) noted that foreign aid affects service delivery in Africa because countries are fragile and are constantly struggling to achieve strong democratic governance.

In this case, foreign aid disrupts economic growth in developing countries and thus leads to underdevelopment and chronic poverty. Buxton and Ampah (2015) and Riddel (2014) noted that foreign aid remains unfavorable and ineffective because it remains volatile in Africa making African countries fragile. Riddel (2014) noted that the unpredictability of aid flows does not bolster good governance instead hinders coherent government expenditure. It also hinders the development of strong democratic institutions that would make political leaders accountable (Riddel, 2014). Niyonkuru (2016) added that foreign aid in times of fiscal deficit, high exchange rate and inflation, increase debt and borrowing. This has repercussion on sustainable development because it makes the governments in Africa unable to stabilize the economy, and achieve an economic growth and development that leads to sustainable development.

### 4.7. Aid dependency promotes debts burden, weak governance and corruption

The seventh finding of this study revealed that aid dependency promotes debts burden and weaken both public and private institutions, leading to social inequality and corruption. Developing countries may become heavily reliant on foreign aid and loans, which can lead to debt burdens and further dependence on the lending nations. Africa's reliance on foreign aid: Many African countries heavily rely on foreign aid for economic survival, which can lead to a cycle of dependence and hinder their own development efforts. Foreign dependency, particularly reliance on external debt, can lead to a heavy debt burden for developing countries, potentially hindering economic growth and development by diverting resources away from essential sectors.

Availability of funds is not sufficient to run an economy on the right path of development, what matters is the institutional quality that improves the efficiency of capital (Agénor and Montiel, 2010). Foreign aid may dampen the incentive for greater resource mobilization through taxation leading to a decline in government revenues, also goods imported by foreign aid projects are often exempted from import duties (Qayyum et al., 2014). Foreign aid in Africa has decreased the government's dependence on its citizens for tax revenues. With high level of foreign aid, recipient governments are answerable mainly to foreign donors rather than the tax payer, in this way the sovereignty of the country is also compromised, as the donors play influential role that may not be a good thing because the donors actually do not know exactly the system of the recipient country and all this collectively leave an adverse impact on the economic growth (Qayyum et al., 2014).

### 4.8. Aid dependency exacerbates underdevelopment

The eighth finding of this study is that aid dependency exacerbates underdevelopment. The cycle of dependence perpetuates underdevelopment, as communities struggle to break free from the need for external assistance. Aid dependency has deepened underdevelopment in Africa as poverty seems to be self-reinforcing (Schaffner, 2014). It has been noted that aid dependency perpetuates underdevelopment and poverty through vicious circles which hinders economic growth as it confines the economy to a low income or poverty traps (Clunies-Ross et al., 2009, p. 109). Scholars have argued that vicious circles are hindrance forces that prevent economic growth as they promote an attitude of aid dependency syndrome (Fujita, 2004; Perry et al., 2006). As Clunies-Ross et al. (2009, p. 109) noted "a typical vicious circle would see initial low productivity levels leading to low per capita income levels … places a very low ceiling on attainable levels of savings which, in turn, rule out the new capital investment needed to improve productivity … the economy is stuck in a low-productivity and low-income-trap".

Thus, the vicious cycles resulting from foreign aid were understood in this study as an imperialist strategy to keep African countries in a poverty trap, thus entrenching underdevelopment, which is a threat to sustainable development. It shows that aid dependency provides a wide range of overlapping vicious circles, which frustrate any attempts by the poor to climb out of poverty and thereby impair national growth performance (Clunies-Ross et al., 2009, p. 110). One can see that the consequences of poverty inhibit people from breaking out of it. It has been noted that for a "special effort to push the economy over a threshold into a region where there is a sustained aid dependency, an increase in economic growth and development becomes impossible (Clunies-Ross et al., 2009, p. 111). Planning diplomacy that raises local people's awareness in the receiving countries to think beyond their status may increase the rate of investment, thus breaking the poverty trap. It has been argued that developing countries that suffer from the effects of aid dependency need a big push to break the constraints of the low-level trap (Clunies-Ross et al., 2009). It is good to note that planning diplomacy serves as that big push. Through planning diplomacy, efforts and attempts to promote economic growth, reduce poverty, and improve income distribution would be made possible (Mahembe and Odhiambo, 2017).

## 5. Planning diplomacy: A remedy to aid dependency

In this study, planning diplomacy for sustainable development was understood to involve the integration of SDGs into domestic policy and foreign policy, allowing citizens to own the process of development projects and the promotion of a culture of cooperation. It also involves negotiation skills that aim to transfer knowledge and use local innovation to foster development. It involves the process that promotes sustainable practices across various sectors including the involvement of citizens to drive those processes.

### 5.1. Planning diplomacy promotes local business for sustainable economic development

The effects of planning diplomacy on promoting sustainable economic development have not yet been explored. Planning diplomacy brings an economic expansion framework that would focus on social well-being of the population. Espinosa et al. (2021) noted that planning diplomacy promotes pillars of economic growth and development. First, sustainable economic development focusses on striking a balance between economic prosperity, social justice and environmental protection (Espinosa et al., 2021). As such, it reiterates the need for efficient use of resources, equitable sharing of the proceeds of economic success and elimination of all forms of environmental pollution.

Moreover, it promotes local negotiations and dialogues with citizens that gives awareness on the role as well as importance of innovation and green technology in sustainable development. This therefore would create enormous employment opportunities. It further involves the efficient use of resources in production through development of circular economies and recycling, as well as giving precedence to long-term development plans. Consequently, planning diplomacy also would enable political elites and their citizens to realize the role of increasing investment in clean technologies and green energy to achieve sustainable development.

Planning diplomacy is a solution for alleviating dependency syndrome and aid dependency because it promotes local planning for development, and the promotion of local innovation. Planning diplomacy prevent dependency syndrome and promotes sustainable development because it empowers governments to strengthen their institutions by providing educational and technical support. These institutions aim at building strong systems that promote and strengthen efficient governance. Planning diplomacy can promote the respect of rule of law and can equally reduce corruption through the management of a country's expenditure and revenue creation in a legitimate and transparent manner. Planning diplomacy can equally enable citizens and political elites to foster democratic governance and economic development, thus leading to sustainable development. This is because when planning diplomacy is effected it fosters inclusivity, participatory and influencing the creation of a larger pool of resources for development locally without waiting for external conditioned funds.

## 5.2. Planning diplomacy promotes knowledge and skills transfer

Planning diplomacy promotes knowledge and skills transfer. Knowledge transfer in this study has been understood as a process of managing the competitive skills and promote production of goods that affects market (Asrar-ul-Haq and Anwar, 2016). Knowledge transfer and its increased importance make it essential for countries to acquire skills such as technologies that boost the achievement of sustainable development (Asrarul-Haq and Anwar, 2016). Through knowledge transfer there is crucial competition at the market which leads to high level of production hence increasing trades relations. Knowledge transfer is linked to sustainable because it helps attain a strategic advantage within the global arena (Son et al., 2020).

Planning diplomacy strengthens negotiation towards knowledge transfer and enables one to receive key knowledge that leads to sustainable development. It enables the quick transfer of effective knowledge throughout the global competition. This means the use of planning diplomacy makes knowledge to be transferred quickly and used for development projects that lead to economic growth and development (Alshahrani, 2021). Knowledge transfer holds importance both inside the sending country (Yeşil et al., 2013) and in the receiving country as well (Zamfir, 2020). One can see that knowledge transfer is crucial in achieving sustainable development because it possesses the ability to enhance economic production through the sharing of skills and other means of production. This is because knowledge transfer promotes sustainable development because it leads to the acquiring of procedures, experiences, and current technologies that foster economic growth and development. Knowledge transfer linked to communalism in the realm of planning diplomacy would promote efficiency, efficacy, and economic return that lead to sustainable development.

Moreover, knowledge transfer significantly impacts sustainable development by facilitating innovation, promoting technological advancements, and enabling the adoption of sustainable practices across various sectors, ultimately contributing to a more resilient and equitable future. It has been argued that it promotes the establishment of structures, processes as well as the variabilities and dynamics of the complex socio-technical system that set paths towards sustainable development (Urmetzer et al., 2018). Scholars argued that through knowledge transfer, development is made possible and sustainability as well (Wittmayer and Hölscher 2017; Hirsch Hadorn et al., 2011). This is because it includes the ability to separate causes of poverty from their symptoms, and foster sustainable ways to address poverty and achieve economic growth (Urmetzer et al., 2020). This means that knowledge transfer becomes important in sustainable development as it promotes innovation that affects economy from worse to better. Through knowledge transfer, sustainable development, competencies "enable successful task performance and problem solving with respect to real-world sustainability problems, challenges, and opportunities" (Wiek et al., 2011, p. 204). However, aid dependency prevents knowledge transfer, instead make compels the poor global south to spend its scarce resources importing exorbitant processed goods from the wealthy global north (Enuka, 2018).

## 5.3. Planning diplomacy promotes local ownership

Planning diplomacy promotes local ownership which is an asset towards achieving economic growth and development that promote the achievement of sustainable development in Africa. Planning diplomacy would promote local ownership which is the key in promoting daily business and international business that lead to economic growth and development. However, through the foreign aid powered on a country without planning diplomacy destroys local ownership and transfers it to external donors. Niyonkuru (2016) argued that foreign aid is seen as harmful to local economies and the Washington Consensus came with unbearable conditionality hard to be met, hence make countries recipients of aid remain in chronic poverty. Foreign aid conditionality obstruct any socialist policy formation and makes external donors impose a democratic regime with full support on one political leader thus promoting poverty (Niyonkuru, 2016).

Mostly in Africa, foreign donors have led to the formation of political parties that deprive local ownership to own the process. In the end one rule or autocratic governance which prevents any efforts towards sustainable development is set up (Bebbington, 2005). While the conditionality based on democratic governance is meant to deny over tenure on power and a possible dictatorship which could hinder development, however the external donors end up controlling the process thus install leaders who care for their interests at the cost of development projects in the receiving countries. During the world economic crises in 2008, countries in the global south become highly indebted to external donors who has supplied them with foreign aids. It was advised thereafter that creditors need to be conscious on aid and impose conditionality to countries receiving foreign aid so that they may put in place measures that could make it possible for them to pay back (Niyonkuru, 2016). This could be more frustrating when donor countries send their own experts to monitor the usage and usefulness of the aid to persuade and encourage the implementers to adhere to pre-established agreement (Niyonkuru, 2016). However, this has made African countries remain in chronic poverty becoming impossible to achieve sustainable development because foreign aids led to an imperial attitude that reinforces aid dependency. Niyonkuru (2016) argued that foreign aid undermines governance principles and in Africa has been seen promoting autocratic and dictatorial leadership which is a threat to sustainable development.

Host governments, donors, lenders, bilateral and multilateral international agencies, civil society organizations and scholars refer to ownership in a variety of contexts, more frequently in relation with the implementation of aid financed policy and other institutional reform packages. The causes of failure and success in the implementation of such reforms are often tracked back to weak or strong ownership by the recipient and/or implementing agency. Hence, ownership is linked with effectiveness of policy-based aid in supporting development in a multidimensional manner. In its simplest form, ownership is identified as a key determinant of the degree of commitment to a chosen policy-direction. More complex models refer to ownership as a key determinant of appropriateness and legitimacy of policy choices. However, before this can be done one needs to understand that local ownership involves liberty of doing development projects that uplift citizens from poverty to achieve sustainable income without and imperial and/or external dictations.

## 6. Conclusion and recommendations

The study offered several findings on the role planning diplomacy in address the effects of aid dependency thus promoting sustainable development. It was found that planning diplomacy is embedded within Africa's communalism theory thus promoting a collective attitude that enhances collective development projects and initiatives that lead to sustainable development. The study found that while aid dependency promotes mental laziness and loss of self-sufficient that affect sustainable development, planning diplomacy would foster local cooperation, enhance local innovation thus addressing poverty and underdevelopment. Planning diplomacy was found to have ability to promote collaborative solutions that address challenges like poverty and inequality that hinder the achievement of sustainable development. Planning diplomacy was found to address issues of aid dependency because it builds alliances that enable local citizens to have ownership over development projects that enhance possibility of achieving sustainable development. Planning diplomacy fosters local trade, attract both local and foreign investors. There is need for policy makers to understand the effects of aid dependency and the role of planning diplomacy in addressing them. This would lead to overcoming aid dependency and its effects on economic growth and development therefore achieve sustainable development in Africa.

**Author contributions:** Conceptualization, visualization and methodology EBN; formal analysis, EBN and JM Iqbal; funding acquisition, JM Iqbal; writing—original draft preparation, and writing—review and editing, EBN and JMI; validation, formal analysis, investigation, EBN and JM. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

**Conflict of interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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