



## Poverty and Political Parties

*Report on the cross-party visit of South African delegates to Malawi  
8-13 July 2007*

### 1. The South Africa-Malawi Political Parties Exchange Programme in Summary

*“Do not wait until you are in government to do something about poverty eradication!”* This was the message that ran through the five day (9-13 July 2007) exchange visit of South African political parties to Malawi, held under the theme **“The Role of Political Parties in fighting Poverty”**.

This exchange visit was the first of its kind to be done within the framework of the NIMD facilitated country-to-country political parties exchange programme. The Johannesburg based policy think tank and NIMD partner, Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) and the CMD Malawi jointly prepared this visit. Such exchange programmes are meant to consolidate inter-party dialogue within the country and also further promote cooperation of political parties across countries by way of exchange of experiences. By sharing best practices and lessons learned on various themes of interest to political parties, or by addressing difficulties together, the political parties in East and Southern Africa learn from each other, and learn together.

The SA political parties are giving high priority to the better understanding of the issue of poverty alleviation. A lot of talks have been dedicated to that issue both in South Africa and Malawi particularly with the advent of the process of democratization. Governments in both countries have adopted various policy and structural reforms aimed at eradicating poverty. Much of these efforts are undertaken by Governments and (by implication) ruling parties and yet all parties (both in government and opposition) have a significant role to make the fight against poverty a success.

The exchange programme started with a joint workshop during which political parties from both Malawi and South Africa exchanged views and experiences on what they, as political parties have, can and should do to translate their often poverty eradication oriented manifestos into action. This was spiced up with field visits to the rural parts of Malawi to appreciate some of the initiatives that individual Malawians and also Malawian politicians are doing to contribute to Government efforts in poverty eradication.

During the same visit, the South African political parties held meetings and discussions with their Malawian counterparts on a wide range of issues related to the institutional development of political parties as pillars of democracy. This was done through meetings with representatives of various political parties that are members of the Centre for Multiparty Democracy (CMD Malawi). In the process, the South African political parties had the opportunity of appreciating the functioning of an institutionalized inter-party dialogue platform, like the CMD-Malawi. Through

these inter-party discussions, politicians from both South Africa and Malawi were also able to identify potential 'sister' parties with whom they can, in future, intensify bilateral cooperation.

While the focus of the programme was on role of political parties in fighting poverty, the visit took place at a time when in Malawi, the budget session of Parliament had been overshadowed if not overtaken by the Malawi Supreme Court's ruling of the Constitutional Provision that prohibits Members of Parliament from crossing the floor (Malawi Constitution Section 65). Coincidentally, this was a matter of great interest also to the South African political parties who are having a Parliamentary debate on their crossing of the floor provision in September 2007. As such, the South African political parties were able to appreciate in a real life situation the merits and demerits of this provision.

## **2. The Report in detail**

This report captures some of the key themes and issues that emerged during the course of the visit.

The 8-member delegation consisted of 6 members of political parties and 2 representatives from the Centre for Policy Studies (Shaun Mackay and Tiffany Hodgson). None of these party representatives were from youth formations.

<b>Representative</b>	<b>Party</b>
Mr Obed Bapela, MP and Leader of the delegation	African National Congress
Mr Job Sithole, MP	African National Congress
Ms Janet Semple, MP	Democratic Alliance
Mr Themba Godi, MP	Pan-Africanist Congress
Ms Amanda Hughes	Freedom Front Plus
Mr Strike Thokoane	Azanian People's Organisation

### **2.1 Arrival and official welcome (Day 1)**

The delegation arrived in Lilongwe on the evening of Sunday the 8<sup>th</sup> of July 2007. Members of the CMD Malawi Board, led by their Chairman, Mr Humphrey Mvula (United Democratic Front), The Executive Director for CMD Malawi and IMD Malawi Coordinator, Mr. Kizito Tenthani, and NIMD Regional Coordinator for ESARP, Dr. Augustine Magolowondo welcomed the delegation. The delegation later met with the South African High Commissioner in Malawi, H.E. Ntshadi Tsheole, who gave a background briefing to the South African delegates on the political and economic situation in the country.

### **2.2 Joint Workshop on the Role of Political Parties in Poverty Alleviation (Day 2)**

The joint workshop started with an expert presentation by Assistant Professor Dr. Blessings Chinsinga (University of Malawi) on the poverty situation in Malawi and the various policy initiatives that have been undertaken to address the problem. In addition, this presentation also looked at the profile of political parties in Malawi and various regulatory/legal instruments that govern political parties in this country (see Appendix A).

Following the presentation, the PAC representative from South Africa, Mr Themba Godi, gave a background talk on poverty in South Africa on behalf of the South African delegation. It was supplemented by Mr Obed Bapela and the South African High Commissioner, who also made a presentation. It was further supplemented by the CPS background paper that was circulated to all in attendance (see **Appendix B**).

The workshop provided a comprehensive background to poverty in both countries and examined some of the ways in which each was dealing with it. Of particular significance were the political and party interventions. It became clear that in both countries, most parties had policies on poverty alleviation, while few actually engaged as parties in this. The exceptions indicated that they were involved in skills training; project training and start-ups and where certain skills were short, such as in South Africa, had compiled a list of skilled people who were unemployed and given this to their government as a contribution to poverty alleviation.

A number of other key issues were raised, including the self-sufficiency of smallholders farmers in Malawi – an overwhelmingly rural, agriculturally-based economy - and the role this played in ensuring food security (often influenced by weather patterns, especially drought). The political systems in which parties operated in both countries (including party registration and electoral systems) were dissected and questioned. (See the section entitled “key points” and the papers annexed for an elaboration of the issues raised.)

The discussion also revealed that in both South Africa and Malawi, it is often the parties in Government that seem to have the possibilities of translating their manifestos into action in as far as poverty alleviation is concerned. For the parties outside government, they lack access to public resources. However, parties noted that even when they are outside Government, it is important that they should still explore ways of ensuring that they contribute to poverty alleviation. One way is through their continuous checks of and controls on public expenditure to see to it that Government’s policies and public spending are and remain pro-poor. Another way is for political parties themselves to initiate specific programmes and/or activities that can contribute to the Government’s efforts towards poverty eradication.

## **2.3 Field visits (Day 2 and Day 3)**

### **2.3.1 Visit to Freedom Gardens**

After lunch, the South African delegation, as well as members of the cross-party Malawi delegation visited the poverty stricken area of Dowa in order to examine how some of the Malawians had themselves taken the initiative and successfully developed sustainable and commercially viable, small-scale agricultural farms using mostly natural resources. They visited **Freedom Gardens**, an organic farm owned and run by a Malawian couple. The farm was a demonstration of how poverty could be combated and food security ensured through the efforts of ordinary people, without government intervention. It was an example of self-sufficiency and innovation, as it is highly successful despite its humble beginnings. The delegates were inspired by initiative and dedication that had gone into creating the farm and the many jobs created by the farm in an area in great need of poverty alleviation. The farm had not only ensured food security for the inhabitants but because surplus was being generated and sold to the hotels and markets, it was also ensuring income security. Moreover, it had become a best practice example for other peasant farmers in Malawi to emulate. The delegation learnt that already, one Malawian MP (of the opposition UDF) from Nkhotakota had facilitated and co-organised a study visit of some of her constituents to appreciate what this couple at the Freedom Gardens was doing. The role of an MP or indeed a ‘serious; politician was seen as that of showcasing success stories like these and linking

the people in need of knowledge and information to such success stories. The Freedom Gardens also provides on the job, hands on training opportunities for young Malawians interested to make farming their career.

South African delegates were impressed with the initiative and thought that this was something that could be usefully emulated in South African rural areas as a means of poverty alleviation and ensuring an income for rural smallholders. One delegate was so impressed that he vowed to come back to further study the farm over a more extended time period as a best practice to be emulated in South Africa's rural areas.

### **2.3.2 Visit to Salima North Constituency**

The delegation left Lilongwe for Salima in the morning. This trip was aimed at exposing the delegates to poverty on the ground in a deep rural constituency and to enable them to see how Malawian MPs were undertaking efforts to combat poverty at constituency level. Delegates were invited to join in a typical constituency meeting. Delegates were met by the Traditional Authorities (Chiefs) as well as by the MP for the area, Hon Kaphantengo Yona.

The meeting was very enlightening, and dealt with issues of poverty and governance at a grassroots level. The Malawian authorities made a presentation on the many daily problems around poverty that they faced, as well as how they dealt with them. Representatives from the South African delegation did the same; this was followed by a period of interaction and intervention from both sides, with each seeking to understand more clearly how the other's systems worked.

Key points that arose during this meeting included issues like community/grassroots projects, the role of MP's in poverty alleviation (and a comparison of their roles in both South Africa and Malawi), the budgets allocated to poverty programmes (or lack thereof) and the structure of governments in the two countries from local to national levels. An interesting issue arose on the perceived role of a member of parliament versus the role of a ward councillor in initiating development.

The issue of local governments, which have been suspended in Malawi for quite sometime, and their role in poverty alleviation in both countries was also raised. These points are discussed further in the "key points" section below.

### **2.3.3 Visit to Ku Ngoni Arts and Crafts Centre in Mua (Dedza)**

Later in the day, the delegation travelled to Mua to visit the Kungoni Arts and Crafts Centre where poor people were being trained to make masks and other artifacts to sell to tourists in order to ensure an income and in this way, combat poverty. The visit also helped to put the daily lives of Malawian people into a historical and cultural context as delegates had an opportunity to visit a Malawi cultural museum that is located at the centre.

## **2.4 Consultations with Malawi political parties (Day 4 and Day 5)**

Day four signalled the beginning of bilateral discussions between South African political parties and their Malawian counterparts. Originally, it was planned that these consultations will be on a party to party basis whereby a South African party representative was to have an audience with a Malawian political party. Such a tailor made bilateral meeting would have to be premised on the assumption that the two parties meeting are either ideologically considered as 'sister' parties or

they both have 'something' in common or of common interest. However, this turned out not be possible at this initial stage as it was not easy to determine in advance which Malawian political party was interested in meeting with which South African party representative. It was, therefore, agreed to settle for a format in which all of the South African delegates met simultaneously with the representatives of each political party in Malawi affiliated to the CMD.

The fact that the South African delegation was mixed added an interesting dimension to the talks, as some representatives could relate more to certain Malawian parties than others. The range of views that existed within the South African group thus provided various perspectives on the actions and objectives of the 6 parties they met.

During these meetings, the delegation was met with senior/ executive members of the party. Thus, in the case of the **Malawi Congress Party (MCP)**, the delegation met with the party's president, Hon. John Z.U. Tembo, MP and also Leader of the Opposition in Parliament. The meeting with the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), was led by Dr. Hetherwick Ntaba, Secretary General and Chief Political Advisor to the President, and focussed on Malawi's poverty measures and party politics. In Blantyre the delegation met the People's Progressive Movement (PPM) over dinner. The PPM's discussion was led by Hon Mark Katsonga, MP, and Vice President of the party.

On day five, the delegation met with the People's Transformation Party (PETRA) led by Mr. Dickens Thunde, Acting Vice President of PETRA. The second meeting was a lunch meeting with the Republican Party (RP), led by Mr. Stanley Masauli, President of RP.

The third and last was with the United Democratic Front (UDF). Their delegation was led by Mr. Kennedy Makwangwala, Secretary General of UDF.

### **3. Issues of discussion, observations and lessons**

In all these consultations with political parties in Malawi, a number of related issues were discussed and some lessons were drawn by both sides. These issues can be summarised as follows:

#### *a) On South Africa-Malawi exchange of experiences on poverty reductions*

- i) The Malawian and South African economies are very different, and thus it is difficult for Malawi to emulate South Africa's economic strategies. It is also difficult for the countries to learn from each other in that sphere, as they are progressing in different directions. The SA delegation believes that initial consensus on a set of national priorities and strategies to combat poverty by Malawian parliamentarians, needs to be created if Malawi is to move forward economically.
- ii) It is unrealistic to expect Malawi to industrialise in the same way as South Africa. In addition, side effects of industrialisation, such as urbanisation, would harm Malawi to an extent, given that it bases its culture largely on traditional, rural systems. Traditional family systems are the backbone of the rural areas, which make up the vast majority of the country. In South Africa, programmes to develop rural areas are problematic due to conflicting ideals. South Africa can learn from Malawi by focussing more attention on smallholder farming, rather than allocating big pieces of land to

inexperienced people. Perhaps family units are more viable options as they encourage people to engage in self-help strategies.

- iii) South Africa has the wherewithal to dispense state grants as a substantial part of its poverty-reduction strategies, which Malawi cannot afford. The government is the driver of social policies in South Africa.
- iv) It was noted that a country's national budget as a financial expression of government's priorities is a major guiding tool towards any meaningful poverty alleviation programs. Against this it was observed that 40% of Malawi's national budget is financed by donors. Such being the case, it was observed that Malawi has significant challenges towards driving its own home-grown poverty alleviation agenda.
- v) Enhancing agricultural production through mechanisation was seen as important in moving forward and developing. Perhaps creating industries that enhance agriculture would be sensible. Incentives need to be present for farmers to produce surplus. A cash economy could then grow from this, through co-operatives and markets. Also, creating the infrastructure in rural villages such as markets and access roads to these markets, would help in poverty alleviation. This was a lesson for South Africa too.
- vi) The visit to the traditional authority meeting was very valuable. The fact that it was headed by a women, who wielded her office authoritatively, rather than as a token, was enlightening for the delegation. The Freedom Gardens visit was equally inspiring.
- vii) South Africa and all states in the region can learn from their regional neighbours. The point was made that regional integration, at the level of economies, common markets and even currencies was a critical step forward in combating the scourge of poverty in the region. No country was an island in this respect. Political parties had to learn more about these issues and should be the engines driving them.
- viii) Food security was noted as important, however, income security and infrastructure development are also important and should not be neglected.
- ix) The ownership issue was highlighted. Malawian delegates felt that not enough ownership of poverty alleviation programmes was given to the people at ground level. This was a valuable lesson for the South African delegation.
- x) Attracting investors is crucial to economic growth – especially investment that brings Fixed Direct Investment (FDI) and creates jobs. Tourism needs to be taken advantage of in both countries, and needs to be prioritised more as an avenue for sustainable developmental growth.
- xi) South African parties were intrigued by the lack of discernible ideology by several Malawian parties. They wondered how policies and programmes were informed, developed and driven in the absence of this and probed their Malawian counterparts about this, hoping to learn more.
- xii) Political parties also noted that in both South Africa and Malawi, politicians, particularly the MPs do have enormous responsibilities in meeting the basic needs of their

constituencies. The more rural a constituency is, the more diverse and to some extent 'wild' are the expectations that the constituents have of their MP. In this context, the South African political parties were particularly keen to learn about the newly introduced *Constituency Development Fund* (CDF) in Malawi. This is a special fund that Parliament sets aside for each MP to draw from in order to meet his/her constituents basic development demands. The idea is modelled on the Kenyan CDF. In the case of Malawi, each MP is annually allocated 2million Kwacha (or ZAR100,000.00) for that purpose. While appreciating that this initiative may be what MPs need given what the constituents expect of them, some concerns were also raised to the effect that such a fund may actually conflict with the Local Government system and does not, at least for now, take into consideration issues related to equity since MPs get the same amount regardless of the size of the constituency and their development demands among others. While the South African political parties were keen to learn about the CDF, their Malawian counterparts appreciated very much the kind of support that an MP gets in terms of having some research assistance, an office and some operational support. In this regard, the South African political parties and their respective MPs seem to be well informed/equipped when it comes to contributing to their policy debates not only on national but also on regional and international issues.

#### **Other issues, observations and lessons**

##### **a) *On Regional integration***

Political parties showed a great interest in issues pertaining to regional integration (the Pan African Parliament, SADC Parliamentary Forum, the African Union, etc) and the role that they, as parties, can play in furthering this process. The levels of information on these matters, however, varied with the parties in Malawi benefiting tremendously from their South African counterparts. It should also be pointed out that the role that South Africa can or is perceived to play in the region was a subject of debate but it was apparent that this subject required more time for any fair discussion to be possible.

##### **b) *On crossing of the floor***

Particularly during the consultations between the South African and each of the Malawian political parties visited, the two sides were able to discuss in some detail and share their experiences on a wide variety of party specific issues. An issue that kept on resonating in all these discussions was that concerning crossing of the floor (the Malawi Constitution Section 65). The original text of the section, provides—

“The Speaker shall declare vacant the seat of any member of the National Assembly who was, at the time of his or her election, a member of one political party represented in the National Assembly, other than by that member alone but who has voluntarily ceased to be a member of that party and has joined another political party represented in the National Assembly.”

This section was in 2000 amended and currently provides as follows:

“The Speaker shall declare vacant the seat of any member of the National Assembly who was, at the time of his or her election, a member of one political party represented in the National Assembly, other than by that member alone but who has voluntarily ceased to be a member of that party or has joined another political party represented in the National Assembly, or has joined any other political party, or association or organization whose objectives or activities are political in nature.”

This particular provision has been a bone of contention particularly following the resignation of the Malawi President from the party that sponsored him (the UDF) to form his own party (the DPP) as many MPs from the other parties and also those that were independent followed him to join the DPP. The president referred this section to the Courts of Malawi for their interpretation arguing that this particular provision was in effect contradicting other constitutional provisions (that of freedoms of association among others).

Later the Supreme Court of Malawi ruled that the section on crossing of the floor was actually valid. This meant that the Speaker of the National Assembly, who previously was constrained by the judicial process on the matter, was now in a position to act on the petition that the UDF and MCP had filed to declare seats of the MPs that had left these respective parties, vacant. Consequently, the budget seating of Parliament was discontinued when opposition parties demanded that the Speaker needed to first act on their petitions before debating the budget.

At a time of the exchange visit, there was an impasse in Parliament and the South African delegation was able to appreciate, from various perspectives, the merits and demerits of this particular provision, which is also an issue of concern in their national politics. In some instances, however, the South African cross party delegation was 'misconstrued' by some Malawian parties as if it were an attempt by the South Africans to encourage their Malawian counterparts to appreciate the importance of still remaining as united as a country despite having political differences. As remarked by one senior politician of the ruling DPP, "We see that you are bringing home the point of the need for inter-party coexistence without necessarily put it that way in words. The fact that you are visiting us as a multiparty delegation is clear testimony in this regard". The South African delegation also sensitised their Malawian colleagues on the implications of a continued standoff noting that Malawi as a poor country can not afford such a costly impasse. While it is not possible to assess the impact of this kind of message that the South African delegation was put forward either explicitly or implicitly as understood by some, it is evident that the coincidence of this visit with the political stalemate that characterised the political discourse had a positive contribution on either side.

*c) On the role of traditional leadership structures in contemporary politics*

The field visit to Salima North Constituency provided the delegation with a point of reflection with regard to the role that traditional leadership structures have to play in modern democratic societies. While in South Africa, traditional leaders were only formally recognised in the post apartheid era, in Malawi their formal recognition dates back to as early as the colonial administration when they acted agents of the colonial authority through the indirect rule system. In both South Africa and Malawi, however, experiences with traditional leadership structures appear to be the same: that of not having a clear role and mandate in today's formal administration. During the Salima constituency visit, it was clear that there are conflicts of roles between the Traditional Authorities (TA), the MPs and (the now defunct) Local Government Councillors.

*d) Women in politics*

The question of the participation of women in politics was debated particularly during the discussions with the UDF. It was noted that while in Malawi, women and youths remain greatly marginalised, this is not the case in South Africa. The UDF, (and most probably other parties in Malawi) expressed special interest in having further possibilities to explore this with their South African counterparts.

*e) On institutionalising inter-party dialogue*

In his concluding remarks, the chair of the Malawi CMD, Mr. Humphrey Mvula urged the South African political parties to critically reflect on the possibilities of institutionalising their (South African) inter-party dialogue platform. In his words, “The fears that you may have about forming or belonging to a body like CMD may be the kind of fears we had at the beginning here in Malawi a few years ago. We have however realised that the costs, if any, outweigh the benefits.”

**4. CPS, CMD Malawi and NIMD-ESARP Evaluation of the visit from an administrative perspectives: Lessons Learned**

On the final day, a debriefing session examined the lessons that had been learned on this first pilot visit, in order to inform future visits. In addition, suggestions were made on how to improve such visits in the future. These are detailed below.

**4.1 Administrative Issues**

Conceptualization of the visit objectives: Clear conceptualization of the purpose of the visit by the guests, together with clear indications of the parties that they would like to meet with on a one to one basis, is essential. Once developed, this should be shared with hosts and workshopped (via the IMD coordinator) for practicality, applicability and of course, willingness by the prospective hosts to entertain such a programme.

Content: Where a host country pays a visit to the guest’s country, the objectives (ie. issue being examined) need not be the same. For instance, Malawi is currently debating its electoral system while South Africa also has a debate around some aspects of its electoral system, which has been fairly stable: the Malawians might want to examine the South African electoral system.

Timing: For organizational purposes, ideally, 4 weeks should be allowed for organization of the visit, from the time of request. This will allow for proper organization, buy-in by host parties as well as organization (including visas etc) by the guests.

Programme Timing: The time needed for programme items was underestimated and needs revision – especially the visits to the political parties. More time should be allocated for each meeting. The time needed to travel to Parties’ offices should also be carefully factored in, considering peak traffic times, distance etc. At least 2 hours should be allocated to each session, excluding travel time.

Funding and organization of logistics: It is logical that all in-country logistical arrangements (travel, accommodation, meals etc) should be done by the IMD coordinator in the host country because of ease of operation, access and knowledge of the local situation. However, once the programme has been determined between the host and guests, and the flight costs have been determined by both sides, the host country should be tasked with drawing up a budget for approval by IMD HQ or the IMD Regional Office. This will facilitate matters.

#### **4.2. Format Issues**

The format of the visit, in general, was appreciated because it allowed for a mixture of theory, debate and exchange of ideas, examination of practical applications, interaction with the subjects under discussion, and a dedicated space for political parties to explore each other. So this format should, generally be maintained. Also, it is a good idea for visiting parties to be briefed by their own government representatives (eg. ambassador) on the first day of the visit, as this proved invaluable in the South African case. A few individual aspects will need adjustment, as follows:

**Plenary Session:** Having the Ambassador participating in the discussion as a guest should be encouraged as it helps to enrich the exchange to have an official view on some issues. But the experience in Malawi cautions against allowing the Ambassador to become a presenter (resource person) in a conference for political parties. The Ambassador's presence resulted in a number of questions from the hosts around trade & foreign policy, which while connected to the subject of poverty, had the potential to sidetrack the conference and of course sidetrack from the objective of getting the views of political parties – many of which often differ vastly from those of government (especially opposition parties).

**Presentations by Resource Persons:** Time could be saved by limiting the presentations by resource persons. One resource person from the host end should be sufficient. To facilitate this process, 2 background papers on the issue should be prepared and circulated to both hosts and visitors in advance: one detailing issues from the host's side (this may be done by a resource person or CPS, as the case may be) and the other detailing issues from the guests' side (this should be coordinated by the NIMD coordinator).

**Party to Party Visits:** Due to the peculiar political situation in Malawi the planned one to one visits between political parties could not take place. Apart from the obvious restrictions this format places on time allocations and in-depth discussions with any one party, its major drawback is that it tends to restrict frank and open discussions on delicate party issues – thus somewhat 'shallowing' the interaction. Although remote, this situation might prevail in other participating countries: if this happens, the format employed in Malawi (where the entire visiting delegation is taken to each of the host parties in turn) seems to be the best. However, it is more likely that the bulk of participating countries will have a political environment that allows for one to one party exchanges. In this case, we propose that the following process apply:

- **Process for one-to-one party-to-party visits:** That these be scheduled for the last day (or two depending on the logistics involved). Secondly, that each party involved be asked to submit for publication on the ESARP website (Augustine), its manifestos, constitution and a few paragraphs on its structure, ideological inclinations, international affiliations (eg **Liberal International** etc), and anything else that might provide clues to potential visiting parties on possible commonalities and areas of cooperation. This should be both sent electronically to all guest parties well in advance, as well as made available to them through the ESARP site. This will enable visiting parties to select the parties they wish to visit in an informed manner. Once the selection has been made the coordinators in the host countries should contact the parties concerned to secure their buy-in for the visits. There may be some difficulties here because it is not inconceivable that several parties might wish to visit with the ruling party in a country; also others might wish to visit with several parties. So some more thinking needs to go into the logistics. The thinking in the

post-mortem was that we should restrict the visits to two parties at most, thus forcing the parties to choose.

- Logistics for one on one party visits: More strategizing needs to go into this – especially if the HQ of parties are far apart. This will mean that several means of transport may be needed. However, we anticipate that matters will be made easier by locating the activities on these days around the national legislature so that parties can be met at their legislature offices if their party offices are too far off. Ensuring that the legislature is sitting at the time of the visit will, of course, facilitate matters.