

Janneh says MDGs are consistent with NEPAD priorities

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New York, 07 October (ECA) - Describing NEPAD as a framework for achieving the MDGs in Africa, UN Under-Secretary General and Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Mr. Abdoulaye Janneh, said today in New York that the MDGs and New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) were inextricably linked, have similar goals and rely on partnerships at global and regional levels for successful implementation.

Linking the two frameworks, Janneh said: "The MDGs aim to achieve objectives in poverty reduction, education, health, gender, and environment and serve as a reference for measuring development progress while NEPAD is at once a vision and strategic framework to increase the pace and impact of Africa's socio-economic development".

The MDGs and NEPAD thus have similar goals and both rely on partnerships at the global and regional levels for their successful implementation, he said in a statement read on his behalf by Emmanuel Nnadozie, ECA's Director of Economic Development and NEPAD at the high level panel on MDGs and NEPAD.

NEPAD's programmes, projects and targets are therefore consistent with and closely aligned to the achievement of the MDGs, Janneh said, stressing that NEPAD had identified agriculture and food security as one of its key thematic areas, and designed the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)--- whose aims are consistent with the objectives of MDG 1 to reduce poverty and hunger.

Similarly, said Janneh, the other MDGs that aim to achieve universal primary education, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health and combat communicable diseases all relate to different aspects of human development that are at the heart of NEPAD.

"In other words, given their common purpose and mutuality of objectives, successes recorded on the MDG front also contribute to the achievement of the NEPAD vision and vice versa," he said.

Generally Africa has made progress with some MDGs, even if performance has been mixed across indicators and countries. Africa made progress towards universal primary enrolment which increased significantly from 65% in 1999 to 83% in 2009, stayed on track with its goal of gender parity at primary school level, while women's representation in parliament increased in over 80 percent of African countries between 1990 and 2010.

Africa also made advances in stemming the HIV and AIDS pandemic both in terms of preventing new infections and in making Anti-Retroviral Treatment (ART) more readily available to infected people.

While admitting that the initial rapid progress in achieving the MDGs had been slowed down by the adverse effects of the international fuel, food and financial crises, Janneh said the integration of MDGs into national development strategies in African countries had helped to mitigate the negative impact of these crises.

There were other challenges as well, he said, stressing for example, that the positive growth in Africa since the turn of the new Millennium had not resulted in job creation and that domestic resources had not been sufficiently mobilized for the implementation of programmes and projects to stem poverty.

These challenges point to more systemic issues which need to be addressed in the run-up to 2015, making the lessons learnt from the implementation of NEPAD over the past ten years useful, said Janneh.

Janneh said NEPAD had played an important role in promoting regional integration by popularizing a regional and sub-regional approach to programming and project implementation.

Through its major continental frameworks and across a wide range of sectors, NEPAD has created an approach wherein projects have been prioritized based on their readiness for implementation and degree of contribution to regional integration, he said.

NEPAD has also contributed to improved coherence in the various mechanisms and arrangements by which development partners provide support to the African continent, including the UN system which is required by General Assembly Resolution 57/7 to align its activities in Africa with the priorities of NEPAD, and scale up resources for this purpose.

But the momentum of international support for Africa is not yet strong enough to be irreversible, and there are a number of areas in which policy measures and practical actions are needed to lend impetus to the implementation of NEPAD, said Janneh.

One vital area is the role of the private sector in the implementation of NEPAD, where more needs to be done to strengthen public-private partnerships – including in delivering public goods to achieve the MDGs, and the building of infrastructure, he said.

Janneh said such issues point to the need for new thinking on the role of the State and other institutions in Africa which was why the 2011 AU/ECA Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economy and the accompanying Economic Report on Africa was devoted to 'Governing Development in Africa'.

"We have also undertaken knowledge activities to support African priorities in regional integration, trade, food security, climate change, infrastructure, gender, science and technology and governance to mention but a few areas of work pertinent to the NEPAD agenda," he said.

Mr. Janneh said ECA's partnership with the NEPAD Agency is guided by a Memorandum of Understanding between the two institutions, which is now backstopped by a Multiyear Programme outlining ECA support to NEPAD.

"Our intention going forward is to move NEPAD from its initial and successful phase of transforming visions, philosophies, and principles into implementable programmes to one of implementing concrete regional projects," he said.

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