

UN Agencies Infrastructure Cluster of NEPAD Meeting

Opening Statement

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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Executive Secretary of ECA, it is my honour, and pleasure to welcome you all to this meeting of the United Nations Agencies cluster on infrastructure. This is one of the five clusters identified by the UN agencies assisting the African countries to implement the NEPAD programme. Your participation today is a testimony of the commitment of your agencies to collectively and individually assist the African countries towards the achievement of the goals of the NEPAD and we at ECA appreciate that you have accepted to respond to our invitation despite the short notice. In doing so we are collectively showing to our partners and members States that we are a team and are ready to push the implementation of the NEPAD in light of the General Assembly resolution 57/7 of 4 November 2002, that urged the international community and the UN system to organize support for African countries in accordance with the principles, objectives and priorities of the NEPAD.

Our meeting is a response to the recommendation made during the infrastructure cluster meeting which was held in Addis Ababa on 15 and 16 April 2003. This event took place during the fifth regional consultative meeting of the UN agencies working in Africa, held also in Addis Ababa in April 2003.

Dear colleagues,

The main objective of our meeting is among others: to follow up on issues arising from the last cluster meeting that I have just mentioned; to update the activities cluster buy cluster; and to prepare the next regional consultations meeting that will be held probably in early July 2004.

The main principle that should guide our deliberations should be to: materialize the pooling of our efforts in creating synergies in support of NEPAD in a cost-effective and coordinated manner; show concrete examples of cooperation in implementing NEPAD programmes related to infrastructure; propose appropriate ways and means for the next step and way forward to achieve the specific objective of the infrastructure component of the NEPAD; hence participate in the poverty reduction and economic development of the African continent as indicated in the NEPAD framework.

Dear colleagues,

Our cluster is one of the engine to boost trade development as well as physical and economic integration of the continent. As you know these two aspects are key for the economic recovery of African countries; they are also key for ensuring the African participation in the globalization and for achieving the Millennium Development Goal. Therefore, our task to develop the infrastructure component is a key for the achievement of the NEPAD objective and an integral part of our individually and collectively responsibility and mandate.

Dear colleagues

I am sure that the Challenges ahead of us to develop the infrastructure in Africa, are known to all of us, therefore it is not my intention to develop them. But I would like just to stress the importance and necessity of the cross - fertilization process within our cluster composed of 4 sub clusters e.g. transport; water; energy; and ICTs. Infrastructure will not do any thing if not related to other sectoral economic developments. Therefore, we need to deepen the way and means of ensuring coordination, complementarity, exchange of information particularly in developing and implementing projects and programmes towards the assistance of member States and RECs. In this process, we should be seen as a family working as a team and not as individual player without coordination and cooperation. It is through our joint actions and cooperation that we will make a real impact and add value to the programme of the NEPAD. This doesn't mean that our regular programme is not recognized.

Dear Colleagues
Ladies and gentlemen

I have no doubt that we will come up with concrete proposals that will boost the implementation of the infrastructure component of the NEPAD. I am also sure that we are all prepared to work in a cooperation environment, therefore I would like to conclude this welcoming statement by reiterating once again the appreciation of ECA for your participation and to declare open our consultations meeting.

Thank you for your kind attention
