



**Forum on NEPAD:**  
**‘Enhancing African ownership and partnership  
to move the NEPAD agenda forward’**

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
7 November 2009

**Aide Memoire**

## **Objective**

The key objective of the forum is to determine a broad strategic approach towards enhancing ownership and partnership in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) by African stakeholders. This will be achieved through wider and deeper as well as an all inclusive involvement of a large cross-section of stakeholders drawn from the civil society, academia, public and private sectors.

More specifically, the forum will serve as a platform for candid and open-ended dialogue towards:

- Exploring ways and means of enhancing African ownership and partnership in the implementation of the NEPAD vision and mission, given the context of the AU/NEPAD Integration;
- Engaging on the prospects for strengthening NEPAD, as Africa's integrated development programme, and its governance structures, including the a lead role for the new NEPAD institution, and
- Identification of strategies and recommendations to effectively move forward NEPAD agenda through increased ownership and partnership among African people.

## **Background and Justification**

As the vision of the African Union (AU), NEPAD was designed to guide fundamental continent-wide socio-economic development by eradicating poverty and underdevelopment and reducing Africa's marginalization in the global community. More fundamentally, it was designed as the policy framework for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted in 2000, a year before NEPAD was launched.

NEPAD was launched by the African Heads of State and Government in 2001 with a great deal of enthusiasm and optimism. Much of this optimism was based on the belief that it constituted a more realistic, Africa-owned and Africa-centred development framework with a greater potential for success. It was also believed that NEPAD addresses the shortcomings of the unsuccessful continental development frameworks and programmes that preceded it. Nonetheless, almost eight years after NEPAD was launched, the extent to which it has lived up to its potential remains a highly debated issue.

Progress has been made in several areas of NEPAD since inception. To illustrate, NEPAD has provided political and technical leadership in contributing to the development of continental sectoral policy frameworks to guide interventions in Africa's priority sectors. These include the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP), Short-Term Action Plan for Infrastructure (STAP), Africa's Science & Technology Consolidated Plan of Action (CPA), and the Environment Action Plan (EAP).

Furthermore, a number of countries and organizations have, to varying degrees of success, taken action to implement NEPAD programs/projects in the priority areas including the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), agriculture and food security, infrastructure and other sector-programs. One key result is, until the global financial and economic crisis, has been the unprecedented levels of growth across Africa in the past decade. Likewise, international support for the NEPAD Programme has grown over the years. Several commitments have been made by Africa's development partners including those of the G8 Summits. In response to these commitments, there has been an increase in official development assistance (ODA) and foreign direct investment as well as new initiatives regarding debt relief and South-South cooperation.

Notwithstanding these notable achievements, significant challenges remain as shown in a study by ECA in 2007<sup>1</sup>. Among these are institutional weakness, coordination challenges, financial resource and capacity constraints, as well as low participation by private sector. Adoption and implementation of NEPAD has been hobbled at the subregional and national levels by limited ownership and involvement of ordinary people at the grassroots level. This challenge is grave given that NEPAD is based on the principle of partnership and ownership.

According to the NEPAD framework document, NEPAD is envisaged as a "vision of an African-owned and African-led" (para 60) development programme through which African leaders are setting an agenda based on national and regional priorities "prepared through participatory processes involving the people" (para 47). Accordingly, the core principles of NEPAD include:

- **African ownership and leadership**, as well as **broad and deep participation** by all sectors of society;
- Anchoring the development of Africa on its **resources and resourcefulness of its people**;

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<sup>1</sup> ECA(2007), Challenges and Prospects in the Implementation of NEPAD, NEPAD, and Regional Integration Department (NRID), September. ECA, Addis Ababa.

- **Partnership** between and amongst African peoples;
- Forging a **new international partnership** that changes the unequal relationship between Africa and the developed world; and

Hence, it is believed, as stated in paragraph 5 of the NEPAD founding framework document that NEPAD “...*will be successful only if it is owned by the African peoples united in their diversity*”. Furthermore, the NEPAD framework calls for the establishment of constructive partnerships between all stakeholders in Africa’s development to overcome the development chasm. This involves partnership with African people and their leaders, between African countries and between Africa and the rest of the world.

### ***Journey so far – Advancing African Ownership***

Eight years on, a recurrent issue has been the inadequacy of structured and wide-ranging engagement and ownership of non-state African stakeholders in the NEPAD agenda and process. Although two of the cardinal pillars of NEPAD are African ownership and “deep participation by all sectors of society”, this has yet to be fully realized. Indeed, recent reviews<sup>2</sup> have highlighted the fact that NEPAD is not as well known as it should be in Africa and that partnerships especially between and amongst African people have not been fulfilled to the optimal level expected.

It is from this perspective that observers point to the un-even NEPAD focus on forging partnerships with Africa’s traditional development partners vis-à-vis the African constituency. In this regard, Africa’s efforts in engaging external partners have not yielded much considering that G8/OECD commitments to Africa continue to be largely unfulfilled. Evidently, the challenge revolves around the following fundamentals:

- Where is the delivery on African ownership as envisaged under NEPAD?

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<sup>2</sup> ECA(2007), Challenges and Prospects in the Implementation of NEPAD, NEPAD, and Regional Integration Department (NRID), September. ECA, Addis Ababa; OSAA(2003), Report of the Regional Workshop on Mobilizing Support for the New Partnership for Africa’s Development: The Role of the Private Sector and Civil Society, Accra, Ghana, 28-30 May, 2003, UN, Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA), United Nations, New York; OSAA(2006), The Contribution of the Private Sector to the Implementation of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development, UN, Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA), United Nations, New York.

- What hinders Africans from taking advantage of NEPAD-inspired initiatives?
- How best should NEPAD engage Africans in the continent and in the Diaspora on NEPAD implementation?
- What should the AU and NEPAD policy structures, do differently, at this critical stage, to actualize African ownership and partnerships?
- What are the effects of all-inclusive engagement of African stakeholders in the NEPAD process?

## **Conclusion**

The central factor, therefore, is that enhancing ownership and partnership with Africans themselves, as was originally intended, NEPAD should create broader buy-in and participation by the cross section of non-state actors, especially the private sector. This will lead to the achievement of NEPAD objectives and agenda. Consequently, having a better understanding of ownership and partnership imperatives requires continued dialogue among key actors and stakeholders.

In light of the above, promoting African ownership and partnership will augur well for the successful implementation of NEPAD.. To this end, ECA and the NEPAD Secretariat, with the support of the African Union Commission, will organize the Forum on NEPAD for African stakeholders to share views, experiences on enhancing ownership, participation and engagement and strengthening partnership in NEPAD and to chart a way forward.

## **Participants**

The forum will bring together participants from the following organizations:

- The African Union Commission (AUC)
- The NEPAD Secretariat
- The African Peer Review Mechanism Secretariat
- African Development Bank (AfDB)
- Regional Economic Communities (RECs)
- Permanent Representatives Council (PRC)
- Representatives of AU Member States
- UN agencies and organizations working at the regional level
- African Private sector organizations/groupings

- Civil Society Organizations working in Africa
  - Women's Organizations
  - Youth Organizations
- Representatives of academia and Institutions of Higher Learning
- Media
- Specially invited resource persons

## **Organization and Format**

The one-day event will be held at the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 7 November 2009. The forum will take place in plenary guided by a designated facilitator. Brief remarks are expected from representatives of: the AU Commission, NEPAD Secretariat, two RECs, the UN, the private sector, Civil Society and NEPAD Country Focal Points to start off the forum. A facilitator will guide dialogue to ensure a successful achievement of the central objective of the meeting. The forum shall be interactive, in the form of a town-hall meeting, allowing for broad dialogue and brainstorming on stakeholder engagement with NEPAD. In this regard, official remarks and presentations would be very limited.

On the sidelines of the Forum, an exhibition on NEPAD will take place at the Forum displaying publications, reports, documentaries and any other relevant materials on NEPAD.

## **Expected Achievements**

The meeting is expected to lead to a number of achievements:

- A clear identification and understanding of the challenges and constraints to promote increased ownership and stronger partnership in NEPAD at the national sub regional and regional, levels;
- Identification of measures to enhance ownership and partnership in NEPAD in order to accelerate the implementation of NEPAD at regional, sub regional and national levels;
- Serve as a major step to providing greater awareness of the African public of the programmatic actions and measures being undertaken to enhance African ownership and leadership of the NEPAD agenda and process;
- Adoption of a set of recommendations on each of the key issues that emerge during the forum;

- An agreed set of proposals would form the basis for the way forward on this theme;
- Possibility to institutionalize Open-ended forums on NEPAD progress on a regular basis (annual/biennial) with different themes as focused subjects in future
- Press releases; and,
- Web publications

It is also expected that the outcome of the forum will serve as a prelude to the more comprehensive dialogue on the issues of ownership and partnership in NEPAD.

## **Organizers**

The forum on NEPAD is co-organized by ECA and the NEPAD Secretariat with close involvement of the AU Commission, UNDP and AfDB.

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