



The Role of Private Sector and Civil Society in the Implementation of NEPAD

Assessment and Way Forward

Expert Group Meeting

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

28-29 May 2009

Concept Note

Introduction

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was launched by the African Heads of States 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 had addressed the shortcomings of the unsuccessful continental development frameworks and programmes that preceded it.¹ Nonetheless, almost six years after NEPAD was launched, the extent to which it has lived up to its potential remains a highly debated issue and the initial optimism has all but waned in some quarters.

As the vision of the African Union (AU), NEPAD was designed to guide fundamental continent-wide socioeconomic development by eradicating poverty and underdevelopment in Africa, and uplifting the lives of African people, reducing their marginalization and increasing their role 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.

To be sure, progress has been made in several areas of NEPAD since 2001. For instance, international support for it 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 have been increases in official development assistance and foreign direct investment as well as new initiatives regarding debt relief and South-South cooperation. As a result, countries and organizations have, to varying degrees of success, taken action to implement NEPAD projects in the priority areas including the African Peer Review Mechanism, agriculture and infrastructure. The result is unprecedented levels of growth across Africa in the past decade.

Notwithstanding these notable achievements, significant challenges remain. The ongoing global financial and economic crisis which has dire consequences for African countries demonstrates the fragility of the success that African countries have achieved in the last decade and creates an urgent need to accelerate the implementation of NEPAD in order to confront the crises as well as make progress in achieving the MDGs.

However, this requires the full participation of all sectors of the society, including the private sector and civil society. As a participatory programme, NEPAD was built under the pillar of partnership with the civil society and the private sector.

¹ These policy frameworks include: the Lagos Plan of Action for the Economic Development of Africa, (1980 - 2000); the African Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (1986 - 1990); the UN Programme of Action for Africa's Economic Recovery and Development ((UN-PAAERD) 1986 - 1990) and later the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment for Socio-economic Transformation ((AAF-SAP) 1989); the African Charter for Popular Participation for Development (1990); and the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa (UN-NADAF) in the 1990s (1991)

Paragraph 41 of the NEPAD Framework Document states: “What is needed is a commitment on the part of governments, the private sector and other institutions of civil society, to genuine integration of all nations into the global economy and body politic.” However, civil society and private sector participation in NEPAD remains an issue of constant concern at all levels.

Satisfactorily addressing this challenge requires first, an assessment of private sector and civil society roles in NEPAD at the continental, sub regional and national levels to accurately determine how they have performed so far. Taking stock to know where things are at present is a vital first step for progress. The assessment of progress will provide the basis for drawing lessons from past experience and from successful stories and developing a strategy for the way forward for accelerating the implementation of NEPAD. It is on this basis that this Expert Group Meeting is being jointly organized (upon confirmation) by the AUC, NEPAD Secretariat, ECA and AfDB.

Objective

The overall goal is to determine ways of strengthening the role of the civil society and the private sector as key partners and stakeholders in accelerating the implementation of NEPAD. This will be done by looking at the following issues:

1. Close examination of the roles of the private sector and civil society in the AU/NEPAD frameworks, as highlighted in the AU Constitutive Act/Declarations and the NEPAD base document of October 2001
2. Existing pro-business and pro-civil society initiatives that align and promote the overarching objectives of AU/NEPAD
3. The private sector perspective on its role in the implementation of NEPAD
4. The civil society perspective on its role in the implementation of NEPAD
5. The role of the RECs, UN, AfDB and other institutions in enhancing private sector and civil society involvement in the implementation of NEPAD
The way forward: Enhancing private sector and civil society contribution to accelerate the implementation of NEPAD
6. Explore the possibility and prepare ground for a Business Leadership Summit, encompassing African private sector operatives and CSOs, as a strategic engagement of African stakeholders with focus on implementing specific sectoral priority projects/programs and means of re-energizing NEPAD implementation

Such a high-level business event could recommend the adoption of strategies for the African private sector to foster private sector development and implementation of key AU/NEPAD programs/projects. The following are some of the issues that can be thought of in light of the Business leadership Summit:

- Promoting direct linkage between the CSOs/Private Sector in Africa on taking forward NEPADS implementation through ownership and leadership of AU/NEPAD frameworks such as CAADP, PIDA, African Action Plan etc.

- Exploring specific role for the African private sector/CSOs in mobilizing resources in support of AU/NEPAD development agenda.
- Enhancing the competitiveness of the African exports through an African voice (private sector/CSOs) through engagement with bilateral and multilateral processes including the GSP, AGOA (para. 169 of NEPAD base doc) and WTO Doha Development Round (para.166)

With the foregoing, the Expert Group Meeting will be expected to consider how, what and when the private sector/CSOs should contribute to the key objectives of flagship programs/projects of the AU and NEPAD, including

- Trade,/Market Access and Foreign Direct Investment
- Enhancing private capital flows
- Establishment of Business Incubators (para.192 of NEPAD base doc)
- Public/Private Partnerships & capacity building in sectors especially Infrastructure, agriculture
- Capacity Development for the Private sector through initiatives such as Africa Productive Capacity Initiative (APCI) and AU AIDA
- Agri-business
- SMEs
- Technical Assistance for the private sector etc

Participants

Participants in the meeting will include 15-20 experts from the following organizations:

- The African Union Commission (AUC)
- The NEPAD Secretariat
- The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)
- United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)
- African Development Bank (AfDB)
- UN Global Compact
- UNIDO/UNCTAD
- RECs
 - Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
 - Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)
 - Eastern African Community (EAC)
 - Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)
 - Southern African Development Community (SADC)
 - Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD),
 - Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD)
 - Union du Maghreb Arabe (UMA)
- NEPAD private sector organizations: NBF, ABR, NBG, etc.

- Civil Society Organizations such as Action Aid, Oxfam, etc.
- OECD

Organization and Format

The Expert Group Meeting will be held at the United Nations Conference Center (UNCC) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 28-29 May 2009. ECA is responsible for organizing the meeting, which includes providing a venue, handling logistics, sponsoring and arranging accommodation for eligible participants. Financial support from partner organizations will be highly appreciated.

The meeting will take place in plenary with presentations and discussions. Both presentations and discussions will be moderated by facilitators. Written documents and presentations are expected from: the NEPAD Secretariat, RECs, UN agencies and organizations, the AfDB, Private Sector and Civil Society groups. These inputs will be used in the preparation of the final report of the meeting. In addition, relevant background documents on NEPAD, private sector and civil society will be provided. The NEPAD Secretariat will provide an overview of the mandate, expected role and responsibilities of the civil society and private sector in the implementation of NEPAD priorities.

Opening:

ECA will welcome participants and present the objectives of the expert group meeting as well as the expected outcomes. The African Union Commission and AfDB will make brief opening remarks.

Facilitation:

The meeting will be facilitated by representatives of the AU Commission, the NEPAD Secretariat, the AfDB and UN organizations/agencies. Each facilitator is expected to guide discussions, contributions and debates towards the central objective of the meeting.

Reporting:

A consultant will be recruited to serve as rapporteur for the meeting. The rapporteur will also present the key outcomes of the meeting and will be responsible for producing the final report. He or she will be supported by ECA staff.

Expected Outcomes and Follow up Actions

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

- A clear identification and understanding of the challenges and constraints to private sector and civil society participation in the implementation of NEPAD programmes at regional, sub regional and national levels;

- Clear articulation of policy measures to accelerate their involvement in NEPAD implementation at regional, sub regional and national levels;
- Adoption of a set of recommendations on each of the issues discussed during the meeting;
- Adoption of modalities for implementing each of the recommendations; it is expected that the agreed set of proposals would form the basis for the way forward; and,
- Finalization of the report, taking into account observations and recommendations from the meeting
- Roadmap to a Strategic Thrust/Rationale for organizing a Business Leadership Summit on AU/NEPAD Implementation, in conjunction with key lead organized private sector outfits in Africa

In addition to the aforementioned report, a number of outputs are expected to be delivered at the end of the meeting.

- Publication on “The role of Civil Society and Private Sector in the implementation of NEPAD”
- Press releases
- Web publications
- Concept Paper and Roadmap on the Business event
- Identification of sponsors and key actors for the Business event