



UNITED NATIONS INTERAGENCY CONSULTATIONS ON NEPAD

Brief Update on Cluster 4: Environment, Population and Urbanization

1. Cluster Membership:

- ECA – Coordinator
- UN-HABITAT (Convener)
- UNEP
- UNFPA
- IMO
- WMO
- UNESCO

2. 2005 Progress Report:

2005 has been a year of intensive preparations system-wide and the holding of the 2005 World Summit on MDGs. Reports on major achievements by the respective cluster members, including on the implementation of the MDGs and the NEPAD objectives are reflected in the overall Summit Outcome and in the Secretary General's Progress Report on the implementation of NEPAD and international support.

3. Cluster's 2003 – 2005 achievements:

It has been very hard since the establishment of the cluster to make significant progress due to various problems associated mainly with funding, logistics and management commitment. Cluster 4 has however made good progress in view of the success achieved with the NEPAD Cities Programme, the Environment Initiative, and the AU Decision 29, which led to the establishment of the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD).

Since its establishment, Cluster 4 has met six times to:(i) address the challenges of population growth, movement and agglomerations; (ii) address rapid and uncontrolled sprawl of human settlements: MDG Target 11; (iii) address environmental degradation, pollution and conserve environmental resources; (iv) provide relevant and updated demographic data and indicators for planning, progress monitoring and policy decision making.

A major achievement during 2005 was the holding of the first African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD) at the Durban International Convention Centre from 31 January to 4 February 2005, hosted by the South Africa's Ministry of Housing. The conference, whose theme was "Urbanization, Shelter and Development: Towards an Enhanced Framework for Sustainable Cities and Towns in Africa", reflected the political will in Africa to address at a continental level, the challenge of urbanization and goal of sustainable human settlements. The conference was aimed at developing a concerted framework of action to guide and reinforce individual national initiatives to manage, direct and harness the developmental attributes of towns and cities.

In 2005, five intergovernmental consultative meetings to review the first drafts of the Sub-regional Action Plans of the Action Plan for the Environment Initiative of NEPAD were organized. In addition, the Second Partners Conference on the Environment Initiative of NEPAD was held in Dakar, Senegal from 15-16 March 2005 to review the implementation of the Action Plan and deliberate on the financial mechanism for the implementation of the Action Plan.

Different environmental assessment and early warning activities in support of the NEPAD Environment Action Plan were also undertaken. The activities included the preparation of the second Africa Environment Outlook (AEO-2) which will be finalized for launch in 2006.

It is also worth noting that support was provided towards the Programme of Plan for the implementation of the African Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction, including the establishment of an early warning system for the continent, which was submitted to the fourth Africa Partnership Forum, held in Abuja, Nigeria on 8-9 April 2005.

The Action Plan for the NEPAD Environment Initiative identified post conflict environmental management as one of the priority issues to be addressed in Africa. In this context, work that was undertaken in 2005 included appointing the Programme Officer for Liberia, opening the office in Monrovia and appointing supporting national staff. Technical, financial and logistical support was also provided to the process of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region.

Various projects carried out by the cluster members in the global context of the implementation of the MDGs, while addressing the NEPAD objectives are on-going, including the new initiatives such as the Millennium Cities Project.

4. Implementing PHASE II of the NEPAD Cities Programme:

Phase I of the NEPAD Cities Programme was successfully concluded in 2005:

- (i) NEPAD Cities Programme as a means of achieving a quick- win for the NEPAD was designed as a product of cluster 4 to ground the ideals of NEPAD to the community level through the municipalities initially;
- (ii) A NEPAD City will be understood an African City that will deliver on the MDGs and the NEPAD Objectives;
- (iii) Profiles of seven NEPAD cities completed;
- (iv) Mayor's Committee set up to supervise the NEPAD Cities Award and ensure its acceptance as part of APRM. Mayor of Durban is Chair;
- (v) Final Report of Phase I to be published and launched at the upcoming World Urban Forum III, in Vancouver, Canada, in June 2006.

It is in the cluster's greatest interest to capitalize on the momentum of phase I of the NEPAD Cities Programme and intensify efforts to continue building constituencies towards an effective ownership of the NEPAD objectives and the MDGs at the regional and local levels.

The proposed Phase II activity log frame, includes:

- (i) Raise awareness and sensitise local authorities and local communities to the relevance of the NEPAD objectives on the African development;
- (ii) Enhance the capacity of local authorities to assist national Governments in addressing the NEPAD objectives and managing the delivery of basic services in a manner that will contribute to the reduction of poverty and socio-economic cohesion in Africa;
- (iii) In addition, related advocacy work will be carried out by the cluster members at the regional, national and local levels in close collaboration with the NEPAD secretariat and the African section of United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLGA).

5. Challenges and Issues:

- Besides the main issue of lack of funding, several concerns may be raised in relation to the participation of members, coordination and implementation of activities, and the inter-linkages within cluster;
- As a result, momentum may be lost in follow up, if information is not regularly shared with the cluster convener by the members thus resulting in incomplete reports;

- The cluster was concerned over the past months with the initial failure to integrate population and urbanization issues in the environmental action plan. Even if this was slightly remedied in the work plan adopted at Tripoli, more has to be done to redress the trend;
- These concerns are probably due to the predominance of sector driven supply approach rather than a demand driven approach. However, on the latter one, it has been noted that the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), which are expected to be the main implementers of the NEPAD initiatives, have not always been active in the process of feedback and participation. Work has also to be done in this context to improve the situation.

6. Factors needed to make the cluster work better:

As was outlined in the previous report, the following actions need to be taken to improve the work and maximize the results of the cluster as per its mandate and objectives: (i) secure agencies' commitment to coordinated and consolidated reporting; (ii) improve on the delivery of outputs and set a task force of few persons drawn from the agencies to deliver and follow up specific components of the programme output and report to the cluster; (iii) build cluster consciousness through improving on information and communication with each other about on-going activities, and through joint representation of missions, conferences, etc, and sharing of mission reports; (iv) engage with the RECs on a representational manner, i.e. agencies will inform each other of missions with dates for information sharing and coordinated discussion of cluster programs with the RECs.

7. Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Cluster is scheduled to take in March, or eventually, in April 2006. The Convener will address a notification to all members to this effect.