

**SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS OF THE FIFTH REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS
OF UN AGENCIES WORKING IN AFRICA**

16 to 17 May 2003

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

1. The Fifth Regional Consultations of UN Agencies Working in Africa was held from 15 to 16 May 2003 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It was chaired by the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, Mr. K. Y. Amoako. Prof. Wiseman Nkuhlu, Chairman of the NEPAD Steering Committee and Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa, as well as UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Africa, Mr. Nouréini Tidjani-Serpos also participated. Most UN agencies, departments and programmes participated in the meeting, as well as representatives from the African Union, and the International Organization for Migration, participating as observers. An issues note was prepared on the challenges faced by the clusters and the way forward.
2. In his opening remarks, the Executive Secretary noted that the Regional Consultations have become the framework for organizing the work of UN agencies in support of NEPAD. He recalled that last year the Consultations established the 5 thematic clusters around the NEPAD priority areas and their modalities for cooperation and achieving quick wins. A common reporting mechanism was also agreed on.
3. The Executive Secretary highlighted some of the progress that has been made thus far, namely, all 5 clusters have met at least twice to agree on modalities and identify quick wins; a consolidated cluster report was sent to New York for consideration by the Committee on Programme Coordination, scheduled to meet in June 2003. The same report was also submitted to the High Level Committee for Programmes (HLCP) and the NEPAD secretariat. The Executive Secretary emphasized that progress was uneven; with some clusters advancing more than others. For example, the subclusters on HIV/AIDS, Water and Governance had narrowed their activities and agreed on a division of labour and timelines for implementation.
4. The Executive Secretary pointed out that there still remained enormous challenges in the UN system-wide support of NEPAD, and urged agencies to use these consultations to critically examine progress and resolve outstanding challenges. He expressed his expectation that the Consultations would draw on best practices and lesson learned with a view to delivering concrete activities within a specified timeframe by next October's meeting, which would be chaired by Deputy Secretary-General, Louise Frechette.

5. The Executive Secretary informed the Consultations that Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, Under Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA), had just concluded a mission to Addis Ababa where he had met with the AU Commission, UN Country Team in Ethiopia and ECA colleagues to discuss modalities for cooperating with OSSA. Unfortunately, prior commitments prevented him from staying on to attend the Consultations. Mr. Eloho E. Otobo, Chief, Policy Analysis and Monitoring Unit, OSAA, briefed participants on the role, functions and structure of the office, stating that OSAA was the outcome of two complementary although unrelated processes – the final review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa (UN-NADAF) and the Report on the Secretary-Generals Reforms both of which underscored the need for greater coherence on Africa. African leaders also requested the SG to explore ways of enhancing coherence on Africa at the HQ level.

6. OSAA will focus on four key activities under the acronym ARCS: (i) Advocacy for Africa at the global level, (ii) Reporting on Africa, with emphasis on NEPAD, to the General Assembly and other intergovernmental bodies, such as the CPC; (iii) Coordinating African issues at Headquarters, including providing technical backstopping to the Secretary-General on Africa and NEPAD issues, and chairing an inter-departmental task force on Africa at HQ and (iv) Servicing intergovernmental bodies at HQ. Mr. Otobo stressed that OSAA has no operational functions and that most of its activities would be “headquarters-specific”. He added that, since its inception, OSAA has been working closely with the UN Resident Coordinators in Africa, ECA, the NEPAD Secretariat and the AU Commission.

7. In his presentation, Prof. Wiseman Nkuhlu, Chairman of the NEPAD Steering Committee, acknowledged that all UN agencies have been supporting the NEPAD secretariat in elaborating the priority areas of the Initial Action Plans. In this regard, NEPAD has come up with detailed implementation plans in the following areas: Agriculture, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance, Health, and Infrastructure. He indicated that more work needs to be done in the areas of environment, education and market access. Since August 2002, the NEPAD secretariat has been working closely with the AU Commission and the G8 to strengthen mechanisms for supporting peace and security. A critical component of the implementation plan is the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), which was approved by the Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC) in March 2003. The NEPAD secretariat is now in the process of identifying the panel of Eminent Persons to be appointed soon by the HSGIC to oversee the Peer Review.

8. Professor Nkuhlu stressed the important role that the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are expected to play in coordinating NEPAD programmes at the subregional level.

9. The Executive Secretary invited cluster conveners to provide a critical assessment of the progress to date, the value added of the Regional Consultations mechanism and the cluster arrangement. They were also asked to identify impediments and concrete actions towards addressing the challenges of developing coherent joint programmes.

10. Extensive discussions were held on the challenges confronting the clusters and the Consultations as a whole. Clusters then met in their respective groupings and reported back to the Consultations on the outcomes of their meetings (see reports annexed to this Summary).

1 The Consultations agreed on the way forward as follows:

Clusters should identify synergies in their individual programmes for cooperation. These activities should respect the mandates and comparative advantages of each agency with responsibilities clearly assigned and delineated. Ongoing work being undertaken by agencies in the NEPAD context should be given particular consideration for collective action. Execution can be done individually on behalf of clusters.

- Cross-cutting issues such as HIV/AIDS, gender and human rights should be mainstreamed into all cluster activities.
- The importance of science and technology was recognized and it was agreed that an informal group of agencies, to be lead by UNESCO, was set up to work with NEPAD and to review the possibility of creating a new or realigned cluster or subcluster in this area.
- Recalling GA Resolution 57/7, all agencies were requested to realign their programmes in support of NEPAD. Several agencies were allocating resources specifically for cluster activities and others may wish to follow suit.
- Clusters should take the opportunity of holding their meetings around key events and conferences where many agencies are participating. Clusters should also take advantage of available technology to hold videoconferences, especially agencies located in major hubs such as New York, Geneva, Vienna, Rome and Addis. For example, the Agriculture, Trade and Market Access could easily avail itself of this technology. The Consultations cited the need to rationalize meetings being held in support of NEPAD to reduce the current overload. It also suggested the establishment of an “early warning” mechanism for information exchange and better coordination.

The Consultations agreed that NEPAD, AU, and ECA as coordinator, should participate in all cluster meetings and activities. Furthermore, it was felt that NEPAD should co-convene cluster meetings, and that DPKO, DPA, OCHA and the World Bank should be involved in cluster activities, particularly those relating to Governance, Peace and Security. Moreover, the consultations agreed that the Regional Economic Communities should be invited to the Regional Consultations and to the cluster meetings, when appropriate. Furthermore, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSSA) would be invited to all Consultations.

For better programme coordination and delivery, it was agreed that all agencies should assist in strengthening the capacity of the RECS, the NEPAD secretariat and the African Union Commission.

- The consultations stressed the need for increased advocacy at the country-level to popularize and enhance ownership of NEPAD's agenda. To this effect, it was agreed that agencies should utilize the Resident Coordinator system to coordinate their advocacy campaigns, including the pooling of resources for this purpose. It was noted that UNDP had made some resources available to the NEPAD secretariat in this regard.

It was agreed that ECA would consolidate cluster reports for submission to OSSA for inclusion into the Secretary-General's Report on Africa. OSSA would review other reporting requirements of clusters and individual agencies with a view to possible streamlining.

The need for collaboration between the five clusters was cited. It was agreed that the cluster conveners should meet periodically to exchange information and identify areas for collaboration.

12. In concluding, the Executive Secretary expressed his appreciation for the positive spirit evident among agencies, and the progress made thus far despite the challenges of bringing coherence to our collective activities in support of NEPAD. He noted that the Consultations were well attended but encouraged agencies to ensure that their representation includes colleagues from headquarters' and substantive divisions. He indicated that he would bring to the attention of the Senior Management Group the challenges being confronted by the clusters and the importance of the continued involvement of the Chief Executives to further strengthen system-wide support to the implementation of NEPAD's agenda. Professor Nkuhlu added that NEPAD will be considered a failure if viewed in the short term. He stressed that all concerned needed to see this as a long-term process and to evaluate gains in five-year intervals rather than as "quick wins." Finally, the Executive Secretary hoped that by the October Consultations, clusters would be in a position to report their concrete achievements.