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## G8 Africa action plan to beat famine and boost agriculture

### Support for NEPAD and the African Union

**AN action plan to end the cycle of famine in the Horn of Africa, to raise agricultural productivity and to promote rural development in food-insecure countries has been announced by the G8 group of countries through the White House in Washington.**

The announcement, released by the Office of the Press Secretary in the White House, says:

**"We fully**

## support NEPAD...and the CAADP"

"We are united in our belief that famine is preventable in the 21st century. Famine, food insecurity, and malnutrition have many complex causes, and defeating them will require a global partnership between the governments of affected countries, donors, international institutions, the private sector, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

"We renew our commitment to help build this partnership, particularly in Africa, where more than 200 million people remain threatened by famine or food insecurity.

"We support fully the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the principles and goals set out in the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).

"In particular, we applaud the African Union Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security, in which African leaders committed to allocating at least 10% of national budgetary resources for agriculture and rural development.

"Our efforts to fight famine, hunger and food insecurity are a demonstration of our commitment to achieve internationally recognised development goals, including the goals of halving by 2015 the number of people who suffer from hunger and from poverty."

The announcement noted that under the Evian Famine Action Plan, the G8 has made significant progress in coordinating emergency assistance efforts in the Horn of Africa and improving famine early warning capabilities.

## Developing an alternative to emergency food aid

**G8 members will take the following actions in close coordination with each other, governments in the region, and all relevant stakeholders:**

- Work with the AU, NEPAD, regional economic organisations, business groups and relevant international institutions to review and improve the investment environment in Africa and promote private sector links and development.
- Work with the new Coalition for Food Security in Ethiopia to give unified support to the Government's nascent structural reform effort. G8 and other donors have worked with the Government of Ethiopia to develop an alternative to emergency food aid which should cover more than five million people over three years. We will work with the Government and other donors to realise the Government's goal of attaining food security for five million chronically food insecure people by 2009.
- Help accelerate land reform and strengthen land tenure for all Ethiopians, including vulnerable groups, by supporting the Government's plan to establish a system of user rights in the context of its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).
- Expand support for rural infrastructure development in the Horn, including social infrastructure, soil fertility, and water management programs.
- Unleash the power of markets through cash-for-work and cash-for-relief programs and working with business associations and cooperatives to expand private participation in market development.
- Facilitate regional economic integration and debt relief to mitigate threats of famine and strengthen rural economies as has occurred in

## Facilitating regional economic integration and debt relief

## Improving farming techniques and raising yields

- other regions of Africa.
- Provide emergency assistance, both food and non-food. Although harvests improved in 2003-04, substantial emergency assistance will still be required for Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, and Sudan, in part because of political instability and displacement of populations.
  - Support national efforts to improve data collection and monitoring systems and enhance capacity to respond to emergency food crises in line with the NEPAD initiative on Stimulating an Agriculture Renaissance in Support of Food Security in Africa presented at the April 2004 meeting of the African Partnership Forum in Maputo.
  - Sponsor in cooperation with the African Union (AU), NEPAD, and other relevant organisations a public-private forum in the second half of 2004 aimed at offering concrete solutions to the challenges of raising agricultural productivity, especially for the rural poor.
  - Explore ways of improving farming techniques and raising yields through improving investment climates, disseminating appropriate and practically usable agricultural technology, identifying research needs, infrastructure and knowledge bottlenecks, and trade capacity gaps.
  - Support the work of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and others that will channel more effectively resources allocated to research and development of drought, pest, and disease-resistant staple crops for use in developing countries. We will also support initiatives on staple Africa food crops, including the NEPAD Pan Africa Cassava Initiative, the Global Cassava Partnership and the Pan Africa Nerica initiative.

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## NEPAD talks to World Bank and USAID on Africa's agriculture needs

**A NEPAD delegation, led by Prof. Richard Mkandawire, held meetings in Washington with the World Bank and USAID between 9 – 15 June 2004 to discuss areas of possible cooperation and support for NEPAD's Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program (CAADP).**

Other members of the delegation were Dr. Ousmane Badiane, IFPRI Senior Research Adviser to NEPAD, Dr. Tobias Takavarrasha, FAO adviser to NEPAD, and Ms. Ingrid Kirsten, researcher in the agricultural unit of the NEPAD Secretariat.

The objective of the mission was to: (i) discuss implementation of the CAADP and (ii) present CAADP initiatives under which NEPAD would like to mobilise US assistance for African countries.

It was agreed that performance of the agricultural sector needed to be improved significantly to meet the goals of ending hunger and reducing poverty and it was recognised that improved performance in the agricultural sector would require greater support and leadership from the World Bank.

**The Bank team stressed the need for African countries to more clearly: (i) show their support for**

**agriculture as a priority sector and (ii) express, at the national level, their desire for increased lending to the sector.**

It was regarded as critical that NEPAD works with governments to mobilise and help articulate the demand for investment in the agricultural sector.

The NEPAD team clarified the role of the Secretariat as being one of mobilising financial resources as well as technical expertise so that individual African countries can have access to finance for projects under the individual CAADP initiatives. Implementation will take place and be managed at national and regional levels.

The NEPAD team has just finalised a draft implementation roadmap for the CAADP to provide a coherent framework for assistance to African countries. It will work with the Regional Economic Communities and member countries over the next 6 – 8 months to develop detailed technical framework documents for coordinating assistance and setting the parameters for successful implementation, including regional and country level implementation arrangements and measurable indicators for progress and performance.

**The three main areas where World Bank leadership is sought are: (i) support for science and technology to raise productivity in the agricultural sector; (ii) improving land management practices and soil fertility; and (iii) improving water control and management, including the development of small and large scale irrigation.**

The Bank and NEPAD have already been working on a Multi-Country Agricultural Productivity program. In addition, the Bank is involved in developing an action plan for land management, which is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

In the discussions with USAID, the main areas where US leadership is needed were identified as: (i) agribusiness development, trade, and market access; (ii) academic and professional training in the agricultural sector; and (iii) information and knowledge systems to support strategy formulation and scaling up of agricultural successes and dissemination of Best Practices.

USAID has significantly expanded its support to agriculture in Africa over the last few years and is now supporting a number of efforts in the three areas.

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## **High-profile seminar seeks new ways to fight hunger in Africa**

**THE Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Anan, the Chair of the African Union Commission, Alpha Oumar Konare, and the Chair of the NEPAD Steering Committee, Prof Wiseman Nkuhlu, will be among the distinguished speakers at a one-day seminar on “Innovative approaches to meeting the hunger MDG in Africa” to be held in Addis Ababa on 5 July 2004.**

Other prominent speakers include Dr. Jacques Diouf, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organisation

(FAO) and Prof. Jeffrey Sachs, Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, New York, and special adviser to the UN Secretary-General on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

The presidential-level one-day seminar co-convened by the Government of Ethiopia and the UN Millennium Project, in collaboration with UNDP, FAO, NEPAD, UNECA and the AU, will bring together many African leaders and international personalities to discuss how to fight hunger in a way different from that of "business as usual".

**Two-hundred-million of the world's hungry people live in Africa, where one person in three is undernourished. The vast majority live in rural areas and rely on the land for both food and income.**

In its Millennium Declaration, the United Nations set concrete targets to be achieved in the next two decades. The Millennium Development Goal on Hunger seeks to halve the number of hungry malnourished people by 2015.

Under the Millennium Project the UN has formed a Hunger Task Force to advise developing countries on how to attain the Hunger MDG.

**The one-day seminar in Addis Ababa – to be held a day before the 6 – 8 July 2004 African Union Summit – will focus on solutions, both policy and technical.**

It will also offer an opportunity to establish a cooperative and collaborative partnership between the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa and development partners to design and launch an Early Action Programme to meet the Hunger MDG.

In his address to the seminar Professor Nkuhlu is expected to report on the progress made by NEPAD and its partners in addressing both hunger and food security.

He will be able to highlight NEPAD's success in harnessing two of Africa's key crops through its Pan-African Cassava Initiative and the Pan-African NERICA (New Rice Varieties for Africa) Initiative.

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## **Peer Review is the way forward to a better Africa**

**THE Chairperson of the African Peer Review Mechanism Panel of Eminent Persons, Ms Marie-Angelique Savané, of Senegal, gives her views on the role of the African self-monitoring mechanism, its current status and its future. Ms Savané (right), a sociologist by profession, has worked with various United Nations agencies in Africa, Geneva and New York, and served on numerous independent commissions.**

***[What is the African Peer Review Mechanism?](#)***

The Inaugural Summit of the African Union (AU) held in July, 2003, in Durban, South Africa, endorsed the NEPAD Progress Report and Initial Action Plan and encouraged Member States to adopt the NEPAD Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic, and Corporate Governance, and accede to the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM).

The first step in the APRM process of self-assessment agreed to by the Heads of States and Government will help expose the strengths and weaknesses inherent in some states and result in a country plan of action.

In one way or another, it will result in support from fellow peers and institutions that have experience in assessments, such as the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), who will be able to assist in overcoming the different challenges facing these states.

Past assessments carried out on African countries were imposed on them. In contrast the APRM is voluntary, which is what makes it unique and original. But it is still a complex process.

Countries are not obliged to accede, they make their own decisions to do so. Herein lies the beauty of the whole process, and demonstrates Africa's maturity to place herself at risk of scrutiny in a situation where there may be little gain. However, I think she will gain in terms of building her self-confidence, in terms of being able to identify weaknesses and strengths, and enabling African countries to find ways among themselves to move towards a mutually agreed Plan of Action to meet Africa's many challenges.

### ***What inspired the formation of the APRM?***

I think that it is the whole atmosphere created by NEPAD. The whole idea of the African renaissance has been brought about by NEPAD.

After so many years of difficulties and lack of optimism, or what is termed African pessimism, some leaders thought that it was time to act rather than wait for others to come and solve our problems. Ultimately, if we believe in ourselves, others will come to believe in us.

This is how the leaders came up with the vision – NEPAD - that would allow Africa to move forward in the 21st century.

In addition, there was a realisation that in order to make a difference or change, there was a need to create a conducive atmosphere – that is, a need to have political stability to bring about good governance, economic growth and development, and strengthen the administrative institutions such as the judiciary, executive and legislature in order to promote development.

We also have to allow the private sector to thrive (both foreign and domestic investments) and create conditions that attract the private sector to invest in African economies. We have to educate and train our people. These are basic needs that governments have to provide to help stimulate growth in the economy.

This is what propelled the need for the APRM.

The first reaction to this mechanism was ridicule, with some people questioning whether Africa was ready to put its house in order, saying "they do not have the guts to do so". The sceptics argued that in the last 40 years democracy has eluded the continent. Why then would these African leaders expose themselves and their rule to the scrutiny of their own citizens.

This is where there are many doubts. However, it is becoming clear that more people are becoming convinced that leaders are demonstrating change by acceding to the process.

## ***You said that countries are not obliged to accede to the APRM. For those that are willing, what are the steps that need to be taken?***

Firstly, the Heads of States sign the Memorandum of Understanding which details the process and outlines the obligations that need to be fulfilled.

A national commission is created, and this must be participatory (media, parliament, including opposition MPs, NGOs, human rights groups, youth, gender, business). This commission carries out a self-assessment and evaluates the country's weaknesses and strengths and comes up with a Plan of Action. The commission's report is presented to the APRM Panel of Eminent Persons, appointed to oversee the process and ensure its credibility by acting independently.

The Panel reviews the report in consultation with experts appointed to verify the information in the report. A mission (comprising of at least 10 persons specialised in the different areas of APRM) meets with the different stakeholders to go over the report, to find out if there is consensus on its contents, and if there is the necessary willingness to participate in the APRM.

The experts' report is then presented to the government, which decides on steps to be taken to implement the recommendations.

From this stage, the report is presented to the Forum of Participating Countries of the APRM who:

- Go over the report with the government concerned;
- Determine the needs of the country, including technical support. If there is resistance from the government to take measures to rectify identified problems then the Forum exerts peer pressure, by peaceful dialogue, to persuade the government to take up the issues raised and move forward.

The spirit of the whole process is peaceful and non-violent resolution to clean up countries and take up the challenge of NEPAD.

## ***Have any reviews been conducted yet?***

Yes, in Ghana three weeks ago. Ghana was the first country to accede to the APRM. Rwanda is next, in the third week of June, followed by Mauritius, Mozambique, and probably Senegal. A total of 18 countries have acceded and five others have indicated their willingness to accede.

I am quite sure more countries will come forward in line with a growing realisation that it is time Africa carried out its own assessment without waiting for others to do that for it.

## ***What is the deadline for each review?***

It will take between six and nine months and will be dependent on the availability of data and the human and material resources of that country to conduct the process of data collection.

For example, Rwanda has indicated that they will be ready to receive the experts' mission before the end of the year and they predict that a report will be delivered to the APR Forum by early next year.

## ***Is there a follow-up process?***

Yes, two years after the government has agreed to implement the decisions. Also exchange visits will be planned between participating countries to learn from one another, best practices, bad experiences, mistakes, etc.

This is a process that will involve a lot of people and will require a lot of participation.

In December this year, there will be a large forum organised by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), at which all stakeholders will come together for dialogue on what has been learnt so far: for instance, how Ghana's experience can benefit Cameroon, which will be ready for its reviews then, or what was done in Rwanda that may not apply in Mauritius, or how Senegal's experience can help francophone countries with their political system.

The follow-up process is important to sustain credibility of the mechanism and give some substance to the efforts and trials and errors that Africans are going through.

Africans should be proud because this exercise has never been undertaken anywhere before. There is always a tendency for the continent to be told what is good practice. This time, however, our practice can be emulated to help solve the basic problems of other nations.

### ***Is there a rotation process for the APR Panel?***

Yes, the Panel will serve a term of four years. This is important to infuse fresh blood and new ideas, a different way of thinking and appreciation of the political situation in Africa.

### ***Is sufficient information coming from Governments to meet the requirements of the APRM?***

Well, that is why we will rely on the independent experts' review and assessment of the situation, including the institutions with experience in similar situations such as the African Development Bank, Economic Commission for Africa, Association of Central Banks, Civil Society. All these efforts will be put together to get the most current and accurate data.

### ***Does the public get to see the results of the review and what is the procedure?***

First and foremost, the important aspect of the process is its participatory nature. The citizens are part of it.

Each country's report will be made public after it has been presented to the APR Forum. It will not be hidden or kept by the Head of State. This is also the basis for citizens to check the process and the progress of implementation.

### ***What is the feedback system?***

It begins right away. Information is flowing in either direction. Transparency is guaranteed due to the involvement of different stakeholders: for example, opposition parties will not sit quiet if the findings of their country's report are not being heard in Parliament.

Transparency is ensured by the real diversity of the national commission and the media is a part of this process, so articles will be published.

The beauty is that we are not just talking, but are changing the way of conducting our affairs in Africa.

Yes, it is likely that there will be some infighting. I mean governments will be sharing a table with other stakeholders, but at the end of the day, a consensus will be reached which will be implemented.

What is of paramount importance is that we as Africans find our own solutions. We are not naive. This is going to be a tough situation with people on either side of the spectrum participating in the process.

And whether or not we succeed, what is important is the maturity that has been displayed, through the acknowledgment that we need a review process that will put in motion change for a better Africa.

***You obviously believe that the APRM will succeed. What is the one thing that you think will make it work?***

Political maturity of the Civil Society will help make the process a success. If Civil Society understands that this is not a maxima-list type of situation, there is a possibility of a major breakthrough in Africa.

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## Calendar of events

- **23 - 29 June 2004**, East African Submarine System (EASSy) Cable Project Management Committee - Kampala, Uganda
- **28 - 30 June 2004**, African Ministerial Council on Water (AMCOW) - Tunis, Tunisia
- **28 June 2004**, NEPAD Advisory Board Meeting - Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- **28 - 30 June 2004**, NEPAD Science and Technology Coordinators Conference – Pretoria, South Africa
- **1 - 3 July 2004**, ADB Water Week - Tunis, Tunisia
- **5 July 2004**, Innovative Approaches to Meeting the Hunger MDG - Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- **6 July 2004**, NEPAD Steering Committee – Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- **6 - 8 July 2004**, 3rd Ordinary Session of the Assembly (AU Summit) - Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- **7 July 2004**, NEPAD Heads of States and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC) Summit - Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- **7 - 9 July 2004**, Commonwealth Business Council and International Telecommunications Union (ITU) LDC Stakeholders' Forum & Summit on ICT - Mauritius
- **13 - 14 July 2004**, NEPAD Science and Technology Steering Committee Meeting - Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- **19 - 21 July 2004**, NEPAD French West Africa Editors' Workshop - Dakar, Senegal
- **22 - 23 July 2004**, NEPAD Follow-up Continental Advocacy Campaign Workshop - Dakar, Senegal
- **28 - 30 July 2004**, NEPAD ICT Broadband Infrastructure Workshop for Eastern and Southern Africa - Pretoria, South Africa

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