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African Union Summit pledges to fast-track NEPAD programmes

A decision to fast-track the adoption of NEPAD programmes – including reforms and increased investments in key areas such as agriculture, infrastructure, health, human resource development and education – was taken at the African Union Summit held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 6-8 July 2004.

The aim is to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which, at the current rate of progress in many African countries, will not reach the set targets.

The Summit resolved to undertake measures to enhance the development of expanded and integrated

national development plans and related policies.

It noted the importance of agriculture in Africa's development and reaffirmed its commitment and determination to raise food production, reduce hunger and transform rural Africa by developing and launching Africa's Green Revolution.

Africa's leaders welcomed the support provided by international partners and called upon the international community to significantly scale up support and resources to member states and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to help them achieve the MDGs within the framework of national development programmes.

The Summit noted the progress made in the implementation of NEPAD's Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) -- in particular:

- The Multi-country Agricultural Productivity Programme (MAPP), for which the World Bank has committed US\$500 million;
- The development of a tracking mechanism to monitor the commitment by African governments to allocate 10% of national budgets to agriculture;
- The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) funding to 49 countries for medium-term investment programmes to fast-track the implementation of CAADP;
- A CAADP plan for forestry, fisheries and livestock is being developed, as well as a nutrition programme.

The progress made in the implementation of the short term action plan for infrastructure (STAP), was welcomed, particularly the fact that:

- The African Development Bank (ADB) has approved financing for nine investment projects amounting to US\$580 million;
- The World Bank has approved financing for STAP projects amounting to US\$570 million;
- the fibre-optic submarine cable on the east coast of Africa, and the e-schools projects have reached advanced levels of implementation.

Summit leaders also welcomed the significant progress achieved in implementing the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), particularly the fact that 19 member states have acceded to the APRM, that another three have expressed interest in joining, and that the country review process has started in Ghana and Rwanda and will shortly commence in Mauritius and Kenya.

They called on all member states that have not yet done so to accede to the APRM.

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NEPAD focus on Africa's water – to reduce poverty, promote development

A broad-ranging programme of action driven by NEPAD to meet Africa's many needs in the water and sanitation sector is now well under way since its initial launch in 2002.

It is guided by NEPAD's primary goals of reducing poverty and promoting development. The objective is to improve the water governance necessary for water development projects aimed to meet basic, economic, agricultural and environmental needs for all sectors.

NEPAD also facilitates national and regional co-operation for effective planning and integrated water-resources development and management at river basin level.

Many initiatives

At the continental level, there are many initiatives taking place that embrace NEPAD objectives. These include the African Water Vision for Water, Life and Environment in the 21st Century, the African Ministerial Conference on Water (AMCOW), the African Water Facility, the UN Water African Forum, the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative in Africa, the EU Water Initiative and several sub-regional initiatives and programmes.

All these initiatives are aimed at alleviating poverty and sustainable development in Africa.

In July 2002 NEPAD prepared and adopted the Short Term Action Plan (STAP) on infrastructure. This plan was prepared under the leadership of the African Development Bank (ADB), with the participation of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and with the assistance from the World Bank and the European Development Fund.

During the consultation processes a list of projects from the RECs to be included in the STAP was compiled.

These projects, which originate from the RECs and will be implemented by them, are at different stages of development ranging from inception to project document development. They have been prioritised by the RECs and the countries involved as shown here:

REC	PROJECT	TYPE	CATEGORY	PRIORITY
Common Market for Eastern and Southern African States (COMESA)	Nile basin Initiative	Facilitation	Multi Country	High
Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)	Support for the management of the Water Resources in Central Africa	Capacity Building	REC	Low
Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)	Action Plan for integrated Water resources management in West Africa	Study	REC	Low
	Strengthening of the Niger River Basin Authority Inter-State Forecast Centre and Support of other New and Existing River basin Organisations	Capacity building	Multi Country	Medium
Inter-Governmental Authority on Development	IGAD Hydrological Observing System	Facilitation	REC	High

(IGAD)				
Southern Africa Development Community (SADC)	Assessment of Surface Water Resources	Facilitation	REC	Medium
	Expansion and implementation of the SADC Hydrological Observing System	Facilitation	REC	High
	Groundwater Management Programme for the SADC Region	Facilitation	REC	High
	Guidelines and Support for National Water Sector Policy and Strategy Formulation or review in member States	Facilitation	REC	Medium

It is important to continue the momentum gained in the implementation of the NEPAD programme of action and as such NEPAD is already engaged in the preparation of the medium to long term action plan (MLTAP).

Improved Access

There is an urgent need to increase service provision for many millions of African people still lacking access to safe water and sanitation. There is also the need to increase service provision for irrigation to increase food production and poverty alleviation.

NEPAD is committed to solicit the necessary political support and commitment by governments and international partners to accord high priority to the development of water resources.

Managing Extreme Events

The average growth per capita in most countries in Africa has been less than 5%. Cycles of droughts and floods can very easily wipe out this economic growth and make it impossible to escape the poverty trap.

NEPAD is committed to enhance the management of such extreme events to improve effective and efficient utilisation and management of water resources.

This is done by promoting good practices, building capacity, increasing knowledge base and supporting the installation and maintenance of data gathering networks as well as adoption of unified information systems.

Managing Shared Watercourses

In Africa most river basins are shared by several countries. This by its very nature creates challenges in introducing water governance essential for integrated water resources management (IWRM) and development.

NEPAD's role is to support and facilitate dialogue between countries aimed at addressing any issues in the shared basins.

This will advance the principles of cooperation in the joint management of shared watercourses for the benefit of all riparian states.

Sharing of good practices among countries, adoption of protocols and agreements as well as establishment

or strengthening of river basin organisations is also supported.

Serious handicap

NEPAD has identified infrastructure as one of the major parameters for economic growth and poverty reduction in Africa. This includes water and sanitation, energy, transport and information communication technology.

The current status of infrastructure and in particular water supply and sanitation as well as the infrastructure gap between Africa and the developed world constitutes a serious handicap to Africa's production and improved productivity and competitiveness.

Without addressing the water needs, Africa will continue to remain unable to feed itself and uncompetitive in global markets.

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