



NEPAD Dialogue

Focus on Africa



04 November

The NEPAD Secretariat weekly newsletter

Issue 69

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Stakeholders' bid to speed up process

NEPAD urged to set up Implementation Support Group

Accelerated implementation of NEPAD programmes, projects and policies by all stakeholders and implementing agencies was urged at the first NEPAD Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue in Sandton, South Africa on 22 - 23 October 2004.

Delegates recommended that the NEPAD Secretariat set up an Implementation Support Group, the primary mission of which will be to assist the Secretariat and the Steering Committee to strengthen their oversight and monitoring of NEPAD and speed up the implementation process.

It was further recommended that the Support Group assist the Secretariat to draw up a precise, itemised road map, which will serve as a monitoring and evaluation tool for the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC).

The dialogue, held three years after the adoption of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) at the last Summit of the OAU in Lusaka in July 2001, was hosted by President Mbeki of South Africa and was attended by President Obasanjo of Nigeria (Chairperson of the African Union and the HSGIC), President Bouteflika of Algeria (Vice-Chair of the HSGIC) and President Wade of Senegal (Vice-Chair of the HSGIC).

The 250 delegates represented AU member states, African regional and sub-regional organisations, African

stakeholder groups and international partners.

The purpose of the dialogue was to provide a platform for an objective assessment of the progress achieved during the three years of NEPAD's existence, to examine the present challenges and to chart the way forward.

THREE-YEAR OVERVIEW

Prof. Wiseman Nkuhlu, Executive Head of the NEPAD Secretariat provided a three-year overview of the NEPAD process, reiterating the objectives, priorities and principles of NEPAD, its achievements and challenges.

He emphasised the nature of NEPAD as a vision for the continent, a framework and a programme within which member states, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the continental institutions and regional partners all act.

In response, presentations were made on the challenges and successes in the African integration process, the role played by RECs over the past three years, the role of civil society, the role of the private sector, the role of African Ministers in implementing NEPAD at the country level, the role of women in NEPAD and the mainstreaming of gender in the African agenda.

The positive achievements in the development and implementation of NEPAD so far, in the creation of conducive conditions for sustainable development and in carrying forward the agenda in priority sectors, were welcomed.

However, it was acknowledged that the pace and scale of implementation is still not at the levels required.

Lack of human, institutional and financial capacity continues to impede implementation. Further, low levels of awareness, as well as involvement and ownership across the full spectrum of African stakeholders still need to be increased, to include women, the youth and the African Diaspora.

PEACE AND SECURITY

It was noted with appreciation that peace and security is now being addressed as a top priority and the framework to address peace and security issues is being put in place. The meeting also recognised the nexus between political stability, peace and security on the one hand and development on the other.

A call was made for the UN to be reformed, particularly the Security Council, to make the organisation more responsive to Africa's needs. Specifically, when authority is given to the region to intervene in a conflict situation, this must be matched with the resources to enable the intervention. Africa has the human resources, but requires logistical support, equipment and financing.

There is a need to mobilise and engage all stakeholders in peace initiatives, especially women in peace processes such as conflict resolution, peace building and reconstruction.

FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURE

The NEPAD Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) has been accepted as the framework for the restoration of agricultural growth, food security and rural development in Africa.

The challenge for NEPAD, national governments and Regional Economic Communities is to move rapidly towards the implementation of identified CAADP priorities. This will require increased domestic and international resourced support and a consistent focus by African governments to achieve long-term tangible goals for agriculture.

The private sector and civil society are critical in the restoration of Africa's agriculture sector for the effective implementation of CAADP. A clear definition of the roles of all key players is required.

A critical component to improving food security is the development of improved capacity at national and regional levels to monitor food security stresses and to develop early warning systems.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The provision of infrastructure was again emphasised as a critical element to development, to regional integration and to the provision of an environment conducive to investment, particularly in reducing the costs and risks of doing business in Africa.

It was emphasised that an integrated partnership between the public and private sector provides the most viable vehicle for ensuring infrastructure development.

Apart from international investment, every effort must be made to mobilise domestic public and private resources, as well as resources in the African Diaspora.

Models of success and best practice need to be showcased to illustrate progress in implementation and to counter negative perceptions regarding Africa and the NEPAD process.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

It was agreed that this is the sector with the potential to show the earliest successes on the ground. It was emphasised that there needs to be a shift in thinking on the part of development partners from country-specific support to regional multi-country and/or Africa wide project/programme support. Support also needs to be coordinated.

Collaboration with the private sector on ICT projects is critical to their success.

MARKET ACCESS AND INTRA-AFRICA TRADE

The focus of the session was on the role of the NEPAD Market Access Initiative in the promotion of trade.

A number of challenges were raised that impede regional economic integration. These are:

- Africa's contribution to world trade, which currently stands at less than 2%
- The need to place trade in the broader economic development agenda and macro-economic framework
- The need for harmonisation of trade regulations and standards
- The need for the promotion of small enterprises, given the fact that African economies are largely driven by SMMEs
- The need for capacity building for RECs for them to implement NEPAD programmes.

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

It was noted that NEPAD has made great strides in international engagement especially in advocacy and in contributing to reversing the decline in Official Development Assistance (ODA). This trend needs to be sustained and accelerated.

The session recognised the challenges facing NEPAD in ensuring NEPAD ownership of its agenda amidst various global pressures and processes.

Other challenges facing NEPAD include translating the pledges into commitments and actual disbursements of resources, ensuring greater clarity on roles, capacity, synergy and coordination among the players at various levels and the implications for donor architecture.

The forum also noted that development partners have tended to focus on social sectors and governance issues and appealed to them to fund infrastructure as a basis for socio-economic development and leveraging for private sector finance and attracting FDI.

HEALTH, HIV AND AIDS

The session, guided by the input of President Bouteflika during the Presidential Panel, recognised that the huge burden of disease and suffering in Africa is not only compromising health, but also the AU/NEPAD goal of sustainable socio-economic development on the continent. It therefore calls for a strengthened commitment to health by both Africans and development partners.

Africa's burden goes beyond HIV and AIDS and efforts must also reinforce measures against other communicable diseases, such as malaria and TB, non-communicable diseases of lifestyle and also the tragic heavy loss of life related to childbirth.

As this burden will not be overcome unless health systems in Africa function effectively, the dialogue identified actions aimed at strengthening country health systems and services and for addressing the crisis in human resources.

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

It was generally acknowledged that it is important for NEPAD to build on what already exists in the countries and regions. To this end it was recommended that studies should be carried out to determine activities that are already underway in the countries.

It was observed that science and technology are drivers of economic growth but there is limited political support for S and T in Africa. African states are importers of technology instead of promoting local generation of technology. NEPAD goals are to harness and apply S and T for Africa's sustainable development and to enable Africa to contribute to the global pool of science and innovation.

There are currently 12 S and T flagship areas in which concrete projects are being developed. The Secretariat has facilitated the establishment of the following networks; African Biosciences Initiative; the African Laser Centre; and drug research, discovery and manufacturing. These are all geared to address key challenges in health, environment and agriculture.

PRIVATE SECTOR (MINING, MANUFACTURING AND TOURISM)

The private sector remains important in driving the NEPAD process as it controls most of the resources. However, implementation of policy remains difficult as long as coordination is lacking.

Triangular partnerships between NEPAD, governments and the private sector should share strategic information, implement projects, strengthen the African private sector and support the development of SMEs. It is also important that the private sector engages with civil society and the Diaspora in implementing NEPAD programmes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The NEPAD stakeholders renewed their commitment to NEPAD as the tool for a fundamental economic and social transformation of the continent aimed at ending the scourge of poverty and underdevelopment and

strengthening the role of Africa in the global arena.

The point was strongly made that Africa first and foremost has to harness its own domestic resources, to mobilise the resources and resourcefulness of the African people in the spirit of self-reliance and taking ownership of Africa's destiny.

African stakeholders need to increase investment in NEPAD programmes and projects in order to underscore commitment and ownership, while the international partners need to scale up and accelerate support to bolster African efforts.

It was noted that NEPAD had not given sufficient attention to the issues of women, the youth, the disabled and the Diaspora and that the issues of these four constituencies needed to be prioritised in the way forward.

The dialogue concluded by noting that the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee will hold its next meeting in Algiers, Algeria on 23 November 2004. The second meeting of the African Peer Review Mechanism Forum will be held back to back with the HSGIC meeting.

Calendar of Events

- **15 - 18 November**, NEPAD Science and Technology Regional Workshops, Pretoria, South Africa
- **20 November**, NEPAD Steering Committee Meeting, Algiers, Algeria.
- **20 - 21 November**, African Peer Review (APR) Panel Meeting, Algiers, Algeria.
- **22 - 23 November**, NEPAD Science and Technology Regional Workshops, Nairobi, Kenya
- **22 - 23 November**, NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC) Meeting, Algiers, Algeria.
- **23 November**, APR Forum Summit, Algiers, Algeria.
- **22 - 25 November**, Conference on Successes in African Agriculture, Nairobi, Kenya.
- **27 - 30 November**, NEPAD Science and Technology Regional Workshops, Algiers, Algeria
- **6 - 9 December**, NEPAD Science and Technology Regional Workshops, Dakar, Senegal

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