



Symposium on ECA's Support to the African Union and its New Partnership for Africa's Development Programme

Outcome Document

1. The NEPAD and Regional Integration Division (NRID) organized a Symposium on "ECA's support to the African Union (AU) and its New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) programme" on 25 March 2008 at the ECA Headquarters.
2. The Symposium was opened by Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ECA, and was well attended by the Deputy Executive Secretary Mme Lalla Ben Barka and other ECA staff members, including those from the Subregional Offices (SROs).
3. The purpose of the Symposium was to:
 - Share views and have frank and open discussions on how the Commission can best fulfil its mandate to support African countries within the framework of the AU and its NEPAD programme;
 - Deliberate on how to strengthen the coordination of UN system-wide support to the AU and its NEPAD programme at the regional and subregional levels; and
 - Provide guidance for a stronger, more coherent and better coordinated commission-wide effort in support of the AU and its NEPAD programme.
4. To guide the Symposium, an Issues Note identifying key issues to be addressed during the Symposium was prepared. In addition, the Director of NRID, Mr. Robert Okello, and the Chief of the NEPAD Support Section, Mr. Emmanuel Nnadozie made presentations on various aspects of NEPAD such as its vision, goal, resource requirements, modalities for ECA's contribution to support NEPAD through its regular work programme, the challenges presented to ECA by the expanded AU and NEPAD mandates and ways of making ECA's support to AU and NEPAD more effective. The Symposium particularly discussed ways of:
 - Strengthening Commission-wide support to the RCM, the AU and NEPAD;
 - Mainstreaming NEPAD into divisional/SRO regular work programme; and
 - Responding to programmatic and resource implications.

Programmatic and Resources related Issues

5. The Symposium noted that NEPAD is a very comprehensive and complex programme with a vision to alleviate all social, economic and environmental challenges of the African continent. Given the considerable number of objectives and priorities, as set out by NEPAD, the extent to which these priorities are integrated into ECA's work programme (Divisions/SROs) is a big challenge and depends to a large extent on the availability of resources, both human and financial. The Symposium discussed past experiences of Divisions/SROs in mainstreaming NEPAD's priorities into their work programme, lessons learnt and what needs to be done to effectively support AU and its NEPAD programme. The Symposium noted with appreciation that some Divisions/SROs have accomplished a great deal in mainstreaming and integrating NEPAD's priorities into their respective work programmes in an explicit manner. In this regard, ECA's Business Plan has been very useful in assisting and guiding Divisions/SROs on ECA's substantive programmes, including NEPAD's programmes and priorities. However, such practice was not common across all Divisions and SROs. More needs to be done to comprehensively and explicitly integrate NEPAD programmes and priorities as part and parcel of the commission's undertakings, focussing on areas where ECA has a comparative advantage, with the involvement of ECA's top leadership. Recommendations made by the Symposium to address the programmatic and resources related issues are as follows:

- (a) The entire Commission should rethink NEPAD so as to have a proper understanding of NEPAD at the ECA level. This exercise should help identify the clients in NEPAD-related activities (AU, RECs, NEPAD Secretariat, members States, etc), establish the ownership of NEPAD (NEPAD to be owned by the African people) and underline the centrality of the private sector in NEPAD;
- (b) For efficiency and maximum impact, ECA should focus on areas where it has comparative advantage. An important activity of the NEPAD Support Section should be to undertake studies on linking development initiatives such as the MDGs and PRSs to NEPAD objectives and priorities. This would facilitate the mainstreaming of NEPAD into national development strategies/plans;
- (c) Explicitly reflect NEPAD-related activities in the regular work programme showing the linkages with relevant initiatives. In this regard, greater support from OPM is required;
- (d) Put in place a mechanism to assist Divisions/SROs to mainstream NEPAD programmes in such a way that specific tasks/activities and expected outputs in each Division/SRO explicitly reflect the NEPAD work programme. OPM should be closely involved to ensure compliance of all Divisions/SROs in undertaking these tasks;
- (e) Strengthen internal coordination within ECA to ensure compliance and programme consistency and effectiveness in support of AU and NEPAD programmes. Close collaboration across Divisions/SROs should be strengthened

to address issues and constraints as they arise, and thereby improve programme implementation. In this regard, NRID has played and continues to play commendable role in providing secretariat support, coordination and advancing NEPAD's programmes and activities, both within and outside the Commission. However, given the comprehensive nature of the NEPAD programmes, it is important that NRID be strengthened further (in terms of human and financial resources) and have clearly outlined activities to effectively discharge its responsibilities;

- (f) Stronger involvement of ECA's leadership is necessary to integrate NEPAD-related priorities and activities in the Commission's work programme;
- (g) Allocation of budgetary resources should be in accordance with ECA's mandate as a significant player in implementing NEPAD's programmes in general, and in particular, the specific role each Division/SRO plays in support of AU and NEPAD, namely: Institutional support to the AU Commission and the NEPAD Secretariat; coordination of UN System-wide support to the AU and its NEPAD programme; and direct support for the implementation of specific NEPAD programmes;
- (h) ECA's Extra-Budgetary (XB) mobilization strategy should recognize the significance of and the financial implications resulting from ECA's support to the AU and NEPAD. This calls for raising adequate resources to meet the pressing financial challenges;
- (i) Collaboration with existing partners and institutions should be enhanced and new partnerships should be explored as a resource mobilization strategy; and
- (j) The RCM should be used to improve collaboration and encourage partners to be more accountable/responsible in implementing NEPAD programmes, including raising financial resources.

Cluster System

6. Based on experience from the RCM so far, the Symposium was of the opinion that large clusters do not appear to function optimally and do not allow meaningful participation by all cluster members. The lesson learned from the infrastructure cluster is that dividing clusters into sub-clusters makes coordination more effective. Additionally, cluster coordination works better when based on existing initiatives (water and energy for example).
7. Some clusters do not have formally designated ECA Focal Points. As such, ECA participation in these clusters is not properly coordinated and effective. There is also an element of fluidity with Focal Points, as staff members move between different ECA divisions and offices, and to other UN agencies. Moreover, the absence of deep involvement of senior management in cluster activities tends to weaken the authority

of Focal Points in interacting with counterparts in other UN agencies who tend to be much more senior. The Symposium recommended that:

- (a) Large clusters to be unbundled into sub-clusters to make interventions on NEPAD and participation more meaningful. Where possible, subclusters should be created to deal with specific thematic area (s) addressed by the cluster. For example, the water and energy subclusters of the infrastructure cluster have been cited as success stories (UN-Water Africa and UN-Energy Africa) because they are based on existing initiatives and their interventions are focused; and
- (b) The designation of cluster Focal Points be formalized and clearly defined in terms of their roles, tasks and responsibilities. Furthermore, ECA's senior management should be more involved in the cluster system. This would give ECA cluster Focal Points more authority in dealing with counterparts in other UN agencies. AU/NEPAD related support should be included in the PIPs and in the ePASs of concerned staff members to enhance internal coordination and the implementation of NEPAD-related activities.

Subregional Coordination

8. The Symposium noted that the presence of UN agencies at the subregional level differs from subregion to subregion. In some subregions, UN agencies tend to have bilateral programs and do not have subregional presence. In such cases, there is no clear modality for intervention at the sub-regional level for AU/NEPAD activities, since the development programs of member states are based on the MDGs and PRSPs. In other subregions, many UN agencies do have subregional presence and the challenge lies in using existing subregional coordination mechanisms to effectively support AU/NEPAD activities. The Symposium recommended that ECA should:

- (a) Forge strategic partnerships to enhance NEPAD coordination at the sub-regional levels;
- (b) Work with RECs and other UN agencies to come up with optimal coordination mechanisms in those subregions where UN agencies are absent or their presence is minimal;
- (c) Link AU/NEPAD coordination with existing strategic partnerships, for example, the ECA-UNDP Compact through RBAs and the SURF mechanism;
- (d) Link NEPAD with on-going country-level initiatives such as the MDGs and PRSPs in those subregions with adequate UN presence;
- (e) Link NEPAD coordination with the "One UN" initiatives at the country level; and
- (f) Use its comparative advantage in knowledge product delivery to leverage on-going activities. For example, ECA has a strong capacity building advantage and

should use it as a conduit to advance one NEPAD agenda at the subregional level.

Institutional support to the NEPAD Secretariat

9. The Symposium underscored that the key challenge was that the MOU between ECA and NEPAD has not been effectively implemented. In the absence of specific guidelines given to Divisions on its implementation, activities have taken place on an ad-hoc basis. Furthermore, there is no clear information on what Divisions are doing with regard to the implementation of the MoU. The Symposium recommended that:
- (a) Focal points within substantive Divisions should do a stocktaking of roles and tasks vis-à-vis NEPAD and identify what has been done and what challenges remain;
 - (b) The existing MOU Focal Points system in divisions to be assessed so that it can serve as a mechanism to strengthen internal coordination and communication on NEPAD;
 - (c) A concrete action plan with specific activities, timeliness and resource implications should be prepared by the NEPAD Support Section to implement the MOU;
 - (d) NEPAD Support Section should be more proactive in pushing forward the NEPAD agenda and in implementing the MoU by liaising with Divisions and ensuring closer monitoring and follow-up on the implementation of the MOU;
 - (e) In-house coordination should be enhanced with more exchange of communication and information among Divisions on the MOU implementation;
 - (f) ECA needs to sort out the issue of staff support to the NEPAD secretariat as indicated in the MOU; and
 - (g) As a broader issue, ECA needs to look into and rationalize various MoUs it has signed with partners and third parties with a view to avoiding duplication and ensuring program cohesiveness.

Institutional Support to the AU: Ten Year Capacity Building Programme

10. The Symposium recognized that the Ten Year Capacity Building Programme is a huge shopping list. There is a need to determine what type of support is possible within ECA's resources and capacities. It was also observed that a lot of the things in the list are on-going activities or projects being undertaken by different agencies. Because of

communication and information problems, there are difficulties to identify and accurately report on what agencies are doing in support of the AU. Moreover, considering that AU has multiple partners, a key challenge is how best ECA coordinates the support from these partners, reports on it sufficiently in the context of the RCM, as well as engages with the AU on a regular basis on the implementation of the 10 Year Capacity Building Programme. The Symposium recommended that:

- (a) The Ten Year Capacity Building Programme for the AU is too comprehensive at present. There needs to be a clear definition of ownership and roles;
- (b) ECA should use the RCM mechanism and liaise constantly with agencies to effectively monitor, follow-up and comprehensively report on progress in the implementation of the Ten Year Capacity Building Program;
- (c) The NEPAD Support Section should approach the UN agencies to obtain more information on what they are doing in support of the AU in the context of the capacity-building program; and
- (d) The ECA Executive Secretary to address the Ten Year Capacity Building Programme with the new AUC Chairperson to find out how to implement it.

Communications and Advocacy

11. The Symposium recognized that several actors are involved in advocacy on NEPAD such as ECA – with its publication the NEPAD briefs; the Office of Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA) – focusing on advocacy at the global level; and the NEPAD Secretariat – media workshops. The key challenge is therefore to harmonize the efforts of all these various actors in a holistic advocacy strategy on NEPAD, especially in the context of the Cluster on Advocacy and Communication, which does not appear to be functioning effectively. The information on ECA activities in support of AU and its NEPAD programme is inadequate and is not shared within ECA. For the Communications and Advocacy cluster to be made more effective, the Symposium recommended that:

- (a) A holistic communication and advocacy strategy is required to have more focused internal communication;
- (b) Advocacy and information dissemination should be well designed to play important roles in promoting activities, achievements and success stories of ECA NEPAD support programs as a means of mobilizing more resources;
- (c) Institute an information-sharing mechanism, (e.g. newsletter) within ECA focusing on success stories of AU/NEPAD activities and divisional work in support of NEPAD, not just what the NEPAD Secretariat is doing;

- (d) Harmonize programmes at the NEPAD, ECA and the Global levels and design a communication strategy that would enable people to feel NEPAD; and
- (e) The press and media houses in Africa need to play a more proactive role in communication and advocacy on NEPAD. In this regard, activities for better media coverage and the creation of NEPAD correspondents to propagate the objectives of NEPAD are to be encouraged.

Monitoring and Evaluation

12. The Symposium observed that there were no benchmarks, time frames and guidance to achieve the NEPAD objectives (unlike the MDGs). It is therefore difficult to measure the performance/achievements of NEPAD-related activities. There is no mechanism for an internal self-assessment, monitoring and evaluation using indicators/benchmarks to monitor progress and impact of ECA's support to the AU and its NEPAD programme. The Symposium recommended that:

- (a) ECA should establish an internal self-assessment and monitoring and evaluation system using indicators/benchmarks to monitor progress and impact of ECA's support to the AU and NEPAD, A monitoring and evaluation mechanism - with statistical database as well as benchmarked and time framed NEPAD objectives – to be introduced within ECA on NEPAD activities. The Statistics division should help in this regard; and
- (b) NRID should provide timely feedback on achievements and gaps with regard to the implementation of NEPAD's programmes. Providing feedback on a regular basis will serve as a useful stimulating factor for more collaboration as it recognizes the contributions made by Divisions/SROs in their respective activities. It will also help in identifying issues and gaps arising during implementation.