

NEPAD: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND ITS PROSPECTS

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Introduction

The New Partnership for Africa-NEPAD is a product of the continuing search by African people and its leaders to create pan-African structures that can lead to the social and economic transformation of the continent in a rapidly “globalising world.” On the other hand, NEPAD is an instrument of contestation between Africans seeking self-determination in their development efforts and those forces that seek the continuation of the exploitation of the continent’s resources upon which the accumulation of their wealth depends. The linkage that brings about this contestation is a historical one, but also a concrete one in that it manifests itself in the continuing structures of imperialist domination of the African people through the post-colonial state, which continue to be a neo-colonial instrument of domination.

NEPAD provides a good example for illustrating this historical contestation that continues to take place between these two forces. The post-colonial state finds itself at the centre of the contestation because of its ambivalence in facing the two forces. On the one hand, it tries to respond to the demands of the people, but then the leaders lack the determination to pursue those demands on the basis of the people’s own decisions in a democratic state. On the other hand, because of that lack of determination to trust the African people, it seeks the support of the enemy to assist in envisioning and implementing what they believe are people’s aspirations.

But this is impossibility. The “ambivalence” of the post-colonial state is in fact a real one because those occupying that state-power aspire to advance their own interests with the same methods, which those who dominate their countries use. They are also culturally influenced by them because of the way they were educated by the colonialists. On the other hand, the people become alienated from the leaders and the post-colonial state because of the inconsistency of their leaders.

This paper seeks to demonstrate that the objectives, which the NEPAD has set cannot in fact be realised because of these contestations and inconsistencies. Below we trace the background to the advancement of the NEPAD as the instrumentality through which the African leaders will transform the continent. The leaders believe that by engaging with “globalisation-” which is but another name for the new imperialism, they will succeed. Our argument here is that they will not.

Background to NEPAD

President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa prior to the crafting of the NEPAD made a ringing call for an “African Renaissance.” He also called the 21st century, “an African century.” These calls and claims have made South Africa, and Mbeki in particular the central focus for an African rejuvenation. It is not surprising; therefore that South Africa has become one of the major contributors to the NEPAD and the African Union. As a reward for these contributions, Mbeki will become the first Chairperson of the African Union when it is inaugurated in July 2002 in Pretoria. This development will further go towards focussing on South Africa as the venue for an African renaissance and it will be necessary to view the NEPAD as a test of this vision. Many people will be asking: “What is the African Renaissance about, and what is its relation to Pan-Africanism?” Others will ask: “Is African Renaissance and hence NEPAD another attempt to confuse the African people in their struggles for real self-transformation?” We shall address these questions in the process of writing this paper.

To be sure, the linkage of these present efforts aimed at African emancipation has their roots to the historical processes in which pan-Africanism arose. It is clearly understood that the New Partnership for African Development-NEPAD, as pointed out by President Mbeki, has to be seen in conjunction with the birth of the African Union-AU, as well as the operationalisation of the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation-CSSDC. In short, the NEPAD is part of a process of setting in motion the new institutionalisation as part of placing Africa squarely in the globalisation process, and to understand this process of new institutionalisation, it is necessary to understand how president Mbeki and other African leaders have gone about creating the environment in which the NEPAD has been articulated and negotiated.

Whence Came the NEPAD?

It is well known that the NEPAD was initially concurrently by Presidents Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal. These documents were the *Millennium Partnership for the African Recovery Programme-MAP* and the *Plan Omega*. The MAP, although initially conceived by President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, was drafted with the support of the Presidents of Algeria and Nigeria. At a later stage, there was the involvement of Senegal and Egypt in the process of merging the two documents. The MAP received its first official endorsement at the Extraordinary OAU Summit in March 2001 in Sirte, Libya, which at the same time declared the establishment of the African Union to replace the OAU.

The MAP was right from the beginning a detailed project for the economic and social revival of Africa involving a constructive partnership between Africa and the developed world. The initiative sought to reposition the continent in terms of global economic relations that were continuing to unravel. The MAP tried to commit African leaders into a pledge based on a firm and shared conviction that they have a pressing duty to eradicate poverty and to place their countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development. It was anchored on the determination of Africans to extricate themselves and the continent from the malaise of underdevelopment and exclusion in a rapidly globalising world.

For this reason, the MAP, in its own words, was seen as a declaration of intent and a firm commitment by African leaders to take ownership and responsibility for the sustainable economic development of the continent, while at the same time recognising the important role to be played by the donor community. Mbeki's leadership lies in the fact that as part of his conception of African renaissance, he tried to critically reassess African performance since its independence in the 1960s. The starting point was a critical examination of Africa's post independence experience and an acceptance that things had to be done differently if Africa was to achieve meaningful socio-economic progress.

It is interesting to note the way Mbeki went about mobilising support for his plan with the external powers even before it was drafted. In his report to the *ANC Today* after his first briefing to the World Economic Forum in Davos on 28th January 2001, president Mbeki went to a great length to explain how he had gone about consulting the great leaders of the developed world before they began to write the MAP. He said:

“During the year 2000, we spent sometime meeting the political leadership of the developed world-the North. Accordingly, in May we met Prime Minister Blair and President Clinton in London and Washington D.C., respectively. We also met the

then Governor George W. Bush in Austin, Texas. In June, we were part of the Berlin meeting on progressive governance. ... In the same month, we visited to participate in and addressed the meeting of Nordic Prime Ministers. Again in June, we addressed the meeting of the European Council held in Portugal, which was attended by all heads of government of the EU. In July, together with Presidents Obasanjo and Bouteflika, we met heads of state and governments of G7 in Tokyo, and had the opportunity to hold bilateral discussions with the Japanese Prime Minister, Yoshiro Mori. While in Tokyo, we also met the President of the World Bank, Jim Wolfensohn. Later, in Pretoria, we also held discussions with the Managing Director of the IMF, Horst Kohler. In September, we addressed the UN Millennium Summit and had an opportunity to meet Presidents Putin of Russia, among others. Before this, we had also interacted with the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, who committed the UN to co-operate with us as we worked on the MAP” [Mbeki, 2001].

President Mbeki is quoted here in length because he himself also wanted to go into length in explaining the journey through which the MAP had traversed and was still traversing before it could actually be placed on the table. He himself explained why he had to go to this length when he wrote: “We mention all these meetings because they enabled us to present to these political leaders the imperatives of addressing ... the challenges of African development.” He adds that it was very “inspiring to hear the entire political leadership of the countries of the North express firm commitment to the ideas of a new concerted effort to address, among other things, the challenge of African poverty and underdevelopment.”

But this is the point, for although Mbeki refers to all his visits in the plural of “we,” with the exception of the G7 meeting in Tokyo, he does not say with whom he carried out these earlier briefings. It is clear that he did all these briefings without coming to any agreement as to what should be Africa’s strategy in this endeavour with the other African leaders and African civil society in general, if indeed the programme he was canvassing for was to be a truly African recovery programme. Mbeki in his briefing informed the business leaders in Davos on 28th January 2001, that “participation (in the programme) will be open to all African countries prepared and ready to commit (themselves) to the underlying principles guiding the initiative.” He added:

“We intend to brief all African Heads of State over the next few months. Our aim is to be inclusive as possible. Thereafter substantive consultations with the leader of the developed countries and multilateral institutions would take place. ... The implementation of the plan will commence as soon as briefings have been completed

and commitments made by a critical number of African countries. ... Countries that are not ready will be welcome to join later.”

All this suggests that the initiation of the MAP was an entirely Mbeki affair, including the briefings that led to the drafting. This is because after these briefings and consultations, he wrote in the same report in the *ANC Today* that it was only at the OAU Summit in Lome, Togo, that African Heads of State and Governments had agreed that Presidents of Algeria, Nigeria, and South Africa should prepare the draft of the MAP and circulate it among these Heads of State. So the “commitment” by African Heads of State that Mbeki was referring to in his briefing in Davos was a commitment to something they had not been agreed to and not been part of. We stand to be corrected.

As for African civil society, the consultation was not even thought of. Since many of the African leaders were involved only peripherally, it is inconceivable that they would have even talked about the plan in their own countries so as to alert civil society to be on the look out and to try to monitor the situation. This explains why many African NGOs and civil society generally plead ignorance when they are asked if they know anything about the NEPAD. Mbeki’s approach, like that of the older generation of leaders was, to think, “plan,” and negotiate with the donors before bringing civil society along to agree any plan. In his *ANC Today* report, he argued: “we have to work to guarantee that the process of renewal represented by the MAP is genuinely based among the people and is not merely a programme of action for governments only.” But this, as have seen above, was to be *after* the fact and not before.

Mbeki therefore took a two-pronged approach in trying to get a consensus around his programme. The first was to try to bring the more strategic African leaders aboard his plan. Participation was to be open to all African countries, which were prepared and ready to commit themselves to the underlying principles guiding the plan at a later stage. Only then was then was the MAP put forward for discussion within African political and economic institutions and later still received the endorsement of the OAU, at its Extraordinary Summit, which was held Sirte, Libya in March 2001.

Another approach with regard to the other African countries was to engage those states, which Mbeki considered “weak” by trying to strengthen their capacity of governance and implementation. Mbeki in his briefings outside argued for the need to create a continent-wide programmes to develop the capacity of these weak states with the support of certain developed countries, the private sector and multilateral institutions. This he did because of his understanding of the implications of globalisation. The MAP therefore proposed a Global Partnership for Africa's development, which would enable Africa to be included in the global

economy and community. This strategy, in Mbeki's understanding, posed a challenge and opportunity both to African countries and the developed countries of the world.

According to Mbeki, the continued marginalisation of Africa from the globalisation process, and the social exclusion of the vast majority of its people constituted a serious threat to global social stability. Simultaneously, the establishing of sound governance at the global level remained incomplete, but it was nevertheless essential for the sustainability of the globalisation process to deal with this issue. Implementation of the MAP, in his view, was not only a major step forward in developing effective global governance, but it would also make a profound contribution to the future welfare of the entire globe.

In this Mbeki put the responsibility for the improvement in global governance first and foremost on the shoulders of the victims of marginalisation instead of the other way round. Those who were in fact responsible for running institutions of global governance were excused and the poor were blamed for not putting their houses in order. Because only when Africa put its political and economic house in order would "sound global governance" be complete and improved. It is no wonder that the rich countries, which manipulate the global institutions of governance for their own good and which are reluctant to reform them, have welcomed this "African Initiative" with a lot of praise of the NEPAD.

At about the same time, President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal, announced his OMEGA Plan for Africa. This Plan identified the need to develop physical capital and human capital as the key prerequisites for sustained and balanced growth and argues for investment needs in priority sectors to be brought under the purview of a single international authority. The OMEGA Plan had the same vision and objectives as the MAP. Both were inspired by the need to launch Africa on a path of sustained growth and development at the dawn of a new century and both were based on the premise that Africa must assume the primary responsibility for that effort.

On his part, President Abdoulaye Wade presented the Omega Plan to the France-African Summit in January 2001. It was formerly launched in June 2001 at the International Conference of Economists on the Omega Plan. This also proves that Mbeki did his briefings to the foreign leaders before coordinating with Senegal. After some time, efforts were made to merge of the two Initiatives. This was done and the merged document was referred to as the **New African Initiative-NIA**. In its preamble, the NIA was stated that the Initiative was Africa's Strategy for achieving "sustainable development in the 21st century." The NIA was submitted and adopted by the AOU-AU Summit in Lusaka, Zambia on 11 July 2001 as the new continental framework for development.

In this connection it is important to note the little known document called **Compact for African Recovery**, which is the product of the Economic Commission for Africa's-ECA. As we have noted above, the MAP referred to the need for participating African leaders to

form a “Compact,” which would commit them to the Programme. The Compact was also to lead to the creation of a “Forum of African Leaders,” who would make decisions about sub-programmes and initiatives and review progress on its implementation. The Compact, according to African Ministers of Finance, was to be the “technical rudder” for bringing together the MAP and Omega.

According to the Economic Commission for Africa-ECA, the Compact for Africa's Recovery represented an important component of ECA's response to the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. The idea of developing the Compact emanated from a speech made by the Executive Secretary of ECA, Mr. K.Y. Amoako, to the Eighth Session of the ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance held in Addis Ababa in November 2000. In his speech, Amoako called for a Compact with Africa in which the developed countries would invest the necessary resources through aid, debt relief and market access in order to “jump-start” African economies in their recovery effort. In turn, Africa was called upon to put in place the necessary political reforms to ensure that their economies would take off.

Endorsing the Executive Secretary's proposal, the Conference of Ministers adopted a resolution requesting ECA to develop the details of the Compact for consideration by the Joint ECA Conference of Ministers of Finance and Ministers of Economic Development and Planning, which was to be held in Algiers in May 2001. The resolution also suggested that the Executive Secretary should consult with individuals and institutions, including the United Nations and Africa's development partners, who have the potential to ensure that the Compact moves to implementation.

As the process of articulating the Compact and the related consultations evolved, it also emerged that Presidents Mbeki of South Africa, Obasanjo of Nigeria and Bouteflika of Algeria were developing the MAP and the Omega for the same purpose. Thus the Compact became an important document for cementing the two African documents together into the New African Initiative-NAI.

The key role of the Compact came out more clearly in developing the basis for developing the “partnership” with the “donor community.” According to the Compact, Africa must put into effect the requisite political reforms in order to attract the necessary investment for economic growth. Thus Compact engendered the propositions of MAP and Omega Plan with “good governance” as the pivot from which “enhanced partnerships” with the donors was to be envisioned.

According to the Compact document, “the quality of governance is critical for poverty reduction” because “poor governance leads to vicious circle of impoverishment, conflict, and capital flight.” On the other hand, it adds: “in a globalising economy international capital seeks secure, rule governed, countries” for investment. This then set the

tone for what was to follow as the NEPAD was “panel-beaten” into a saleable investment document acceptable to the donor community.

Provisions of the NEPAD

The Programme itself contained a vision, a perspective, and the outlines of a plan for the redevelopment of Africa. It clarified the objectives and approach to development projects that were being appraised, further developed and negotiated between partners in Africa and the rest of the world. These objectives and ideas have been modified from time to time to accord with the new situation as it develops. The MAP presents a multi-faceted Programme of Action. The priority areas included:

- Creating peace, security, and stability, including democratic governance, without which it is impossible to engage in meaningful economic activity;
- Investing in Africa's people through a comprehensive human resource strategy;
- Harnessing and developing Africa's strategic and “comparative advantages” in the resource based sectors to lead the development of an industrial strategy;
- The diversification of Africa’s production and exports;
- Increasing investments in the Information and Communication Technology sector, in order to bridge the digital divide;
- The development of infrastructure including transport and energy; and
- Developing financing mechanisms.

The desired objectives through its implementation included the acceleration of efforts to eradicate poverty on the continent and to significantly increase new investments by mobilising both domestic and especially foreign savings and capital. Participating African leaders are required to form a “Compact” committing themselves to the Programme and a Forum of African Leaders. The Forum would make decisions about sub-programmes and initiatives and review progress on its implementation.

The plan envisages both Africa-wide and regional initiatives. Conflict prevention and the eradication of infectious diseases are examples of programmes that will be continental in scope. Economic development initiatives, such as the development of agriculture and agro-industries, economic infrastructure, the promotion of competitiveness and economic integration will be managed at regional or sub-regional levels. Another continental initiative was to be the development of regulatory frameworks for key sectors like telecommunication and energy. The Africa Connection (the telecommunication strategy for Africa already agreed

to) was a case in point. African governments were already working together on conflict prevention and resolution measures and this was seen as a good beginning.

Although the NEPAD saw partnership with the rest of the world as essential to the success of the Initiative, the focus of the NEPAD was not to be based on increased aid but on increased investments in viable infrastructure and business opportunities. It was also to be based on “market access.” Nevertheless, “targeted aid” and technical support to address capacity constraints and urgent human development priorities would still be required. Here certain developed countries, multilateral institutions and (global and national) private sector players were to be targeted. Western political leaders were already being engaged in supporting the Initiative and there was considerable goodwill and commitment for the Programme from them.

In his drive for a new partnership with the developed world, the MAP presented the issue as one of “historic opportunity” for the advanced countries of the world to enter into a genuine partnership with Africa, based on mutual interests and benefit, shared commitment and binding agreement. At the same time, the NEPAD in proposing the partnership with the outside world recognised that Africa itself held the key to its own development. The adoption of a development strategy, together with a detailed programme of action, was to mark the beginning of a new phase in the partnership and cooperation between Africa and the developed world.

On the other hand, the commitments of the developed world had to be translated into action, including such commitments as those agreed in the Cairo Declaration of the EU / Africa Summit, the Skagen Declaration of the Nordic Countries, the programmes of the G8 (e.g. DOT Force, Health infrastructure development), and the UN Millennium Summit Declaration. International development targets in health, education, gender equality, debt reduction, poverty reduction and ODA had to be met as promised. It is this commitment that would act as quid-quo-pro for African commitment to “good governance.” So it was not entirely an African responsibility for its own development. It was still based on the goodwill of the former donors.

Some African leaders were quite serious about their commitments. The Implementing Committee of the African Heads of States, presided over by President Obasanjo of Nigeria, who will henceforth chair the Committee, began to effect the implementation of the NEPAD on October 23, 2001. In his speech Obasanjo drew the attention of those present to what he called “the prevailing environment in Africa,” which was marked by, among other things, “the emergence of a leadership ... that is committed to economic renaissance of the continent, as encapsulated in the New African Initiative programme.” He also briefed the Implementation Committee on the meetings that had been held between the G8 and selected group of African leaders at Chequers, United Kingdom in September 2001; and at the EU in

Brussels, Belgium in October 2001 respectively, during which the New African Initiative was endorsed by the European partners.

The Committee also approved a number of mechanisms for the implementation of the NEPAD. These included the adoption of the revised New African Initiative Document-NEPAD-dated October 2001. The English version was adopted as “original text” embodying the philosophy, priorities, and implementation modalities of the Initiative. It was also decided that “the official name of the initiative” was to be the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). The Committee also decided that the Governing Structure of NEPAD was to be composed of an Implementation Committee of Heads of State and Government; a Steering Committee and a Secretariat. A detailed Organogram reflecting this structure was also adopted, which is as follows:

- a. The Implementation Committee, with President Obasanjo as Chairman and Presidents A. Bouteflika and A. Wade as Vice Chairmen respectively, who will meet once in every four months. It also reaffirmed its composition, in accordance with the decision of the Lusaka Summit of the OAU in July 2001;
- b. The Co-ordinating NEPAD Secretariat, with a very small staff, which is to be located in Pretoria, South Africa;
- c. The Steering Committee, which was charged with the task of developing a strategic plan for marketing NEPAD at national, sub-regional, regional and international levels. This was with the aim of mobilizing domestic support and facilitating private-public sector partnership in Africa as well as enhancing international partnership. The Steering Committee is also to continue preparations for the proposed conference on Financing NEPAD in Dakar, Senegal in January 2002.
- d. The Task Teams/Lead Agencies to urgently identify and prepare specific implementable projects and programmes, which are to be the responsibility of specific organisations such as the OAU/AU, UNECA, ADB, etc. These were to be as follows:
 - i. Capacity-Building on Peace and Security -OAU;
 - ii. Economic and Corporate Governance-UNECA;
 - iii. Infrastructure-ADB;
 - iv. Central Bank and Financial Standards-ADB;
 - v. Agriculture and Market Access- OAU.

The Implementation Committee also agreed that African leaders should set up parameters for “Good Governance to guide their activities at both the political and economic

levels". In this regard, it decided that the Committee adopts an appropriate "peer review mechanism and a code of conduct." The Committee also "expressed the hope that Africa's development partners will complement these efforts by playing their own part". All this went to show that the "parameters for Good Governance" and "Peer Review Mechanism" were all tailored not to free the African people, but to please the "development partners" so that they can "play their part" in financing the NEPAD.

Since "conflict resolution" was regarded as an important element in the "New Initiative," the Implementation Committee also reaffirmed its conviction that peace and security were necessary pre-conditions for "sustainable development" - a new catchword for "development" and "modernization." The Committee, therefore, decided to set-up a sub-committee on Peace and Security to focus on conflict management, prevention, and resolution, particularly within the context of NEPAD process. The members of this Sub-Committee were named to be Algeria, Gabon, Mali and Mauritius, with South Africa as its Chairman. The Sub-Committee was to report to the next meeting of the Implementation Committee. Thus Nigeria and South Africa-"the Big Boys"- became the kingpins around which the NEPAD was to be managed, supervised, and implemented.

The Implementing Committee decided that all other initiatives promoted by individual African countries should be subsumed under the NEPAD process, to represent a basis on which Africa can collectively and effectively cooperate with its "development partners." In line with the geopolitics of the "development partners," the Implementing Committee also paid attention to the international political environment and reviewed the "danger posed to international peace and security by terrorism, including its negative impact on socio-economic development of Africa and the New African Initiative process." It agreed that concerted international action should continue to be taken against "this growing menace," while ensuring that the issue of underdevelopment in Africa is not ignored. Thus, here, just like elsewhere in the NEPAD process, the concern about "terrorism," which was not defined, became an aspect of assuring the "partners" that Africans were not only serious about "Good Governance," but also against the "menace of terror."

The Programme of Action of the NEPAD itself is quite extensive. It covers such concerns as: the need to reduce the proportion of the people living in extreme poverty by half by the year 2015; the need to increase the enrolment of children of school going age by the same year; the need to make progress towards gender equality and the empowering of women by eliminating gender disparities in all social fields; the need to reduce infant mortality rates by two thirds by the year 2015, as well as the need to make provision for access to reproductive health facilities and services for all those in need by the same target dates. The implementation of national strategies for the achievement of "sustainable development" by the year 2005, so as to reverse the loss of environmental resources by 2015 is also targeted.

All these hopes are anchored on the need to promote peace, democracy, human rights, and sound economic management as well as regional co-operation and economic integration.

At the Implementation Committee meeting in Abuja, President Obasanjo called on African leaders to abandon “afro-pessimism” and embark on a new optimism based on a “Marshall Plan.” Indeed, the NEPAD itself was dubbed Africa's “Marshall Plan” because it is modelled along lines of the U.S. plan for European reconstruction after World War Two. In the same vein the NAI-NEPAD involves wide-ranging and hugely ambitious targets such as peace and democracy, education, investment and IT, communications and infrastructure. This, according to the chairman of the NEPAD Implementation Committee, will liberate Africa with the “overwhelming support from the G8, the international community, and the world press.”

NEPAD and the Partners

The NEPAD is premised upon the hope that the G-8 “development partners” will provide the required financial backing to its implementation. Indeed at the very inception of the MAP and the Omega Plan, the thinking behind the two “Initiatives” was that if Africa is to get out of the development trap, it must do so by becoming fully integrated into the global economy. Indeed, the whole conception of Mbeki's concept of the “African Renaissance” is deeply premised on this understanding.

His briefings at G-8 Meetings were intended to put across this conviction to the economic superpowers and to appeal to them for support the programme upon the understanding that a new African had come to the realisation that it must be responsible for its own development so long as the donor community plays its part. This was the approach taken at the World Economic Forum at Davos on the 21st July 2001. The G-8 in response put in place an Action Plan for Africa at their Genoa Summit. The G-8 agreed to support African efforts to resolve African problems. Peace, stability and the eradication of poverty were seen as among the most important challenges Africa faced in the new millennium.

The G-8 also welcomed the New African Initiative, which in their view was based on the principles of responsibility and ownership, with an emphasis on democracy, transparency, good governance, rule of law, and human rights as fundamental factors of development. This initiative, in their opinion, provided the basis for “a new intensive partnership” between Africa and the developed world. They pointed to the significant progress that had been made on conflict resolution in several parts of Africa, but they still argued that in many places

conflict still remained a major obstacle to economic and social development. They therefore urged for continued commitment to conflict prevention, management and resolution by the international community in partnership with African governments, the African Union and sub-regional organisations.

On this basis, the G-8 pledged continued support to the consolidation of democracy, pluralism, and electoral fairness in an increasing number of African countries. They encouraged similar progress towards political openness where democratic principles and the rule of law were weak. They also stressed the importance of working in partnership with African governments to improve access of African products to world markets, attracting foreign direct investment, and the promotion of investment in key social sectors, in particular health and education. They also pledged commitment to the implementation of the HIPC Initiative, which would result in the release of resources for such expenditure. They stated:

“We have decided today to forge a new partnership to address issues crucial to African development. We are committed to promoting this objective with our African partners and in multilateral fora - in the UN, the World Bank, and the IMF, and in a new Round of WTO negotiation. Our partnership will support the key themes of the New African Initiative, including:

- Democracy and political governance;
- Prevention and reduction of conflict;
- Human development, by investing in health and education, and tackling HIV/AIDS, TB, and malaria, including through the Global AIDS and Health Fund;
- Information and communications technologies;
- Economic and corporate governance;
- Action against corruption;
- Stimulating private investment in Africa;
- Increasing trade within Africa and between Africa and the world;
- Combating hunger and increasing food security.

To take this process forward, each of us will designate a high level personal representative to liaise with committed African Leaders on the development of a concrete Action Plan to be approved at the G8 Summit next year under the leadership of Canada.”

With the above, the stage was set in motion in the new relationship with the “development partners.” Since then, G-8 “personal representatives” have been appointed as part of the G-8 Genoa decisions. They have been meeting and liaising with “committed

African Leaders” to develop a “concrete Action Plan” to be approved at Kananaskis, Alberta, Canada on 26th and 28th June 2002. In a speech by one Robert R. Fowler, “Personal Representative” of the Canadian Prime Minister for the G8 Summit African Plan delivered to the Canadian Institute for international affairs on November 15, 2001, Fowler had this to say about the NEPAD:

“In effect this initiative, this new partnership-the NEPAD Acknowledges that the current approach to pursuing developing in Africa simply has not worked and that there’s not enough to show for billions of dollars and decades of development assistance. I think also that the authors of the New African Initiative understood full well that they had to do something about it and something fast because tolerance both inside and outside Africa for this constant demand that we reward failure and continue to reinforce it without much reinforcing of success was a paradigm that simply had to change. *So NEPAD offers a different kind of paradigm. It offers the prospect of concentrating engagement on those countries that are prepared to take political and economic decisions necessary to make this new plan work.* And the prospect of reinforcing success in the Botswana’s, the Namibia’s, the South Africa’s, the Mozambique’s, the Mali’s and Ghana’s and Senegal’s and lots more” [Emphasis added].

With this understanding, the process of developing the G8 Africa Plan on the basis that some countries will be isolated and marginalized while others are rewarded had began. The partnership was not to unite Africa to tackle its own problems, but to disorganise them on the basis of new western philanthropy- a new recolonisation. The process begun with the first meeting of the G-8 “personal representatives for Africa” chaired by Fowler being held in London soon after the Genoa Summit. In addition to these representatives, there was a “mixed bag” of African “Sherpas” who also participated in these meetings.

The emerging structures of the NEPAD were also in place ready to take part in these discussions. They included the NEPAD support secretariat, headed by Professor Wiseman Ncouchelou, who is President Mbeki’s economic advisor; and the five-nation steering Committee, which included South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt, Senegal and Algeria. The president of this entire process is President Obasanjo of Nigeria. In addition, the African Union agreed to the nomination of 15 members of the implementation committee, which will also participate in deliberations relating to this initiative with the partners. This is the same committee we referred to above which met in Abuja to agree mechanisms for implementation.

The task of the G-8 “personal representatives for Africa” is to prepare a response to the African Initiative. This response will then form the basis of a G-8 Action Plan. Fowler in

his speech stated that their response will consist of their own conclusions about how to make NEPAD work, deciding which challenges to take up immediately. He added: "It's quite possible that as time progresses we will decide to expand that focus and move into other areas. But what we want to do is some things, a relatively small number of things right and to demonstrate that this paradigm can be changed." This will, according to him, will determine the "Sherpa process."

The process is also supposed to involve the United Nations and key non-G8 development partners, many of who, according to Fowler "have been an awful lot more generous to Africa than most G8 countries and more committed in their support." He gave examples of The Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, all members of what is being called "the G point 7" Group.

What the G-8 was doing was to ensure that the G-8 Africa Action Plan was both focused and coherent "and not the standard kind of summit Christmas tree which tends to lump together a variety of disparate initiatives." The G-8 Africa Plan is to "add real value to addressing the systemic challenges which are confronting Africa." These include the binding commitments to reduce by half the number of people living in extreme poverty by 2015.; the provision of universal education -- universal access to primary education also by 2015; to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary school enrollment by '05; and reducing infant and child mortality ratios by two-thirds by 2015, to reducing maternal mortality ratios by three-quarters by 2015, to providing access to all to reproductive health services by 2015 and implementing strategies for sustainable development by the same year. As we saw above, these are the basic objectives, which the NEPAD seeks to address immediately.

Prospects for an African Renaissance Under NEPAD

Notwithstanding these "commitments," it is clear that the road leading to a G-8 Plan of Action for NEPAD is not without potholes. No "development partner" can be expected to dispense investment or aid based on sentiments. Moreover, even if all the aid and investment is to be made available, there is no guarantee that "economic growth and development" would occur, for there is an emerging consensus amongst economists that there is no necessary causal link between capital flows and growth, nor is there such causal relationship between growth and development [Rodrik, 2001].

Africa is sold once again

It is from this point of that the real basis of African unity is being ignored by the African leaders who are in haste to deal with their “development partners. This real basis of unity is a political one. This is why it is so baffling that while African leaders placed great emphasis on Africa’s cultural heritage and her contribution to humankind as the cradle of mankind, this was being done to remind the donor community of their “obligation” towards Africa!

In the first section called “Africa In Today’s World: Between Poverty and Prosperity,” the document refers to Africa’s “indispensable resource base that has served all humanity for so many centuries.” This resource base, of which NEPAD boasts is fourfold: first, the rich complex of mineral, oil and gas deposits, its flora and fauna, and its wide unspoiled natural habitat; second, the “ecological lung” provided by the continent’s rain forests; third, the paleontological and archaeological sites containing evidence of the evolution of the earth, life and the human species; and finally, the richness of Africa’s culture and its contribution to the variety of the culture of the global community.”

This rich African heritage, which has been despoiled, looted and plundered by the same “development partners” throughout the last five hundred years in which Africa has continued to be dominated and subordinated, instead of being the basis for Africa’s own development and transformation, became for NEPAD leaders, just a cheap basis for yet “another begging” from the same exploiters under the illusion that they will support a “Marshall Plan” for Africa’s redevelopment!

Instead of building on this negative experience of European domination for self-transformation, the leaders instead blame the state of Africa’s predicament on the African “weak capitalist class.” They are not even able to understand that the same exploiters fought against the emergence of an African capitalist class so that they could enrich themselves on Africa’s resources. It is as if the history of colonisation was momentarily being forgotten while African leaders were busy handing over Africa for a new colonization. No wonder that Tony Blair, capturing on this self-effacement by the NEPAD leaders also called these “weak states” to be “failed states” which need to be “helped.”

What NEPAD has ignored.

It therefore becomes necessary to examine the promise that NEPAD makes to the African people. While it must be acknowledged that Africa must improve its position in the global economy, this has to be done by a concerted effort on the part of the leaders to deal with the very problems, which they want their “partners” to solve. For example, one of the

central issues, which NEPAD tries to address, is conflict amongst African states. Does such a solution require foreigners “partners” to handle? Is not the key to minimizing such conflicts a political unity of the different territorial states that the colonialists created in their “divide and rule” policies?

Secondly, Africa is already part of the global economy. Africa does not need to seek “partners” in order to join the global economy. In fact it can be stated with confidence that Africa is the most open part of the global economy. Yet Africa is the most exploited. Its marginalisation does not lie in its being excluded from the global economy, but in being the most exploited in that global economy. There is no one-to-one relationship between the need to be part of the globalisation process and the need to accept global corporate dictatorship as a method through which Africa can transform its economy.

As we have pointed out above, there is no way we can engage in regional economic integration on the basis of “free trade” and regional “customs unions” in order to arrive at pan-Africanism. The experience has been negative and that is why we have conflicts between African states and internal ethnic strife. NEPAD is to be implemented through national-state structures as well as regional and sub-regional ones. Indeed, the creation of the African union in place of the old OAU does not bring about any qualitative changes on continental political organisation. If anything, it merely complicates it because it ties the implementation of the NEPAD with the institutions of the new continental body. By refusing to integrate the continent politically, they are opening up Africa for recolonisation.

The African Leaders instead of choosing the path of political unity have opted for the colonial division of Africa as the basis of its transformation. That will never happen. It is political unity alone that can make it possible for Africa’s rich resource and cultural resources to be the basis of African development and not financial resources from outside. Indeed the fact that the African leaders have opted for the latter shows that they are prepared to accept the dictates from the G-8 countries in the implementation of the NEPAD.

The African people have once again been made objects and instead being subjects of their transformation. Indeed, it is becoming clear that it is through the G-8 “personal representatives”, that the G-8 will dictate their recolonisation of the continent. NEPAD is already being used to exert pressures for African leaders to accept worse political conditionalities than those, which were imposed under Structural Adjustment Programmes. Some examples will prove the point.

Firstly, most observers of the international scene agree that the events of September 11, 2001 have altered the way the world is going to be governed. One of these changes has already been demonstrated in Afghanistan. This means that any country or leader can be picked on and his country punished if he does not agree with US policy. President Bush has declared: “Whoever is not with us is against us.” This logic is being extended to particular

countries and individuals such as the countries named as the “Axis of evil,” with Saddam being targeted for “punishment.” His is the realization of the New World Order decreed by George Bush, the father during the war against Iraq back in 1992. At the time Bush, the father, defined the New World Order, as “What America says, goes!” This is what Bush the son is trying to implement under the idea of fighting “terrorism.”

During his whistle-stop tour of West Africa early this year, the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair acknowledged that the 11th September attacks on the United States had made a real change in the way we look at the world. Addressing the Parliament in Ghana, he declared: “There are times in politics ... when it is possible to do what was thought impossible only a short time before. Now is such a time.” But the time Blair was talking about was the time to deal with “terrorism” and not grinding poverty in Africa. The concern about poverty in Africa was seen by him in the context of addressing the danger of “terrorism.” He argued that engaging African states could reduce the risk of them becoming “breeding grounds for the kind of people who carried out the U.S. attacks.” He further argued: “If we leave failed states in parts of Africa, the problems sooner or later end up on our door steps.” The idea of “failed states” was now being advanced as a new means for recolonisation of the continent.

So it was the same story all over as far as aid is concerned right from the time president Truman coined the term back in 1948. Aid for the “underdeveloped world” for him meant the need to prevent them from becoming “breeding grounds” for “communism.” Today, giving support to NEPAD is part of the same problem of stopping “breeding terrorism” for the West. Aid has been and still continues to be used as a security instrument. As soon as the problem is no longer there, the “aid” stops as we have indeed seen “aid” decline since the collapse of the Soviet Union. In its recent report: *African Development Indicators 2002*, the World Bank, reported that aid to Africa had declined from \$ 17.2 billion in 1990, just soon after the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989, to \$ 12.3 billion today. In these circumstances, African governments pinning their hopes on investment to the tune of \$ 64 billion per year for NEPAD is too much of a dream, which will never become true.

Secondly, since the Zimbabwe elections, Africa has been warned that if the African leaders cannot condemn their “peers,” they too will be targeted for “punishment.” This was demonstrated when presidents Mbeki of South Africa and Obasanjo of Nigeria, were made to eat their own words by agreeing to suspension of Zimbabwe after the controversial presidential election in that country. NEPAD had after September 11 become a weapon of control of the African states. In the context of September 11, Mugabe was being targeted and singled out as a representative of ‘evil’ in Africa because he had dared interference with the ‘rights’ of Rhodesians over ‘their’ land. He was judged to have rigged the elections even

before they were held and Blair had insisted that Zimbabwe be expelled from the Commonwealth even before the elections were held!

Whatever one may say or think about the elections in Zimbabwe, it is important to realize that both Nigeria and South African observers to the election had come to the conclusion that the election on the whole was free and fair. Whether that conclusion was correct or not is not the issue here. The fact of the matter was that although the two leaders constituted a majority on the three-man Commonwealth Committee, they were made to accept the view of Australia and Britain to suspend Zimbabwe from the Commonwealth for a year. This showed how the NEPAD was being used to achieve certain security objectives of the “partners” than of addressing poverty and conflict in Africa.

Good Governance and the Partners

As we have already noted, the issue of governance came as a result of the MAP attaching the need for reform of the structures of international governance to the issue of the need by “developing countries” in return “committing themselves to conditions of peace, stability and good governance.” While it is true that the African people have long demanded that their governments ensure peace, stability and democracy in their countries. These genuine democratic demands of the African people cannot be made a condition for improvement of the global system of governance, as NEPAD has done.

Democratic rights of the people must be guaranteed with or without NEPAD. The people of Africa fought for these political rights, which have been denied by the post-colonial states. Furthermore, they have since the 1970s demanded for a New International Economic Order and the need to reform the UN and Bretton Woods systems. This has not been conceded by the big powers. Instead as the WTO manipulations in Doha showed, these powers are in no mood to democratise the international economic order. NEPAD cannot subject us to a denial of our rights by making concessions to those who should reform the system by making it conditional on “good governance.”

This “concession” to the “development partners” is peculiarly a Mbekian synthesis for a key argument for African development as an equal partner in the global order has been his insistence on revisiting African post-independence performance and demanding that “things hence forth “ be done “differently.” In his brief to the World Economic Forum in Davos, Mbeki went to a great length to convince the leaders of the rich countries that the MAP was not just a declaration of a firm commitment by African leaders to take ownership and responsibility for the sustainable development of Africa, but that the “starting point” of the African leaders was “ a critical examination of Africa’s post independence experience and

acceptance that things have to be done differently to achieve a meaningful socio-economic progress.”

All this was fine, except that this post independence experience was being “critically” examined in a one-sided manner to include the machinations and manipulations of the multinational corporations of the stronger world economies in having made “sustainable development” in Africa and the “developing world” as a whole almost impossible. Unless this side of the coin is looked at within the same experience, it is obvious that the “Compact” that the leaders would enter into with the “development partners” would paper over their own impositions in the world market and concentrate on weaknesses of African leaders, which were in part caused by the activities of the multinational corporations and the big powers. This would be the standard practice of the strong blaming the weak and oppressed for their predicament.

This came out clearly in the further briefings that Mbeki gave at the same World Forum on the “backlash against globalisation.” Mbeki’s intention in addressing what he regarded as a “backlash” against globalisation was to find ways in which this backlash could be dealt with so that African countries could engage in globalisation. Indeed, in Mbeki’s view, the choice for countries of the South was not whether to engage with globalisation or not, “but how to engage with it.” But even then the “how to engage” was limited to a demand for “reform” of the international financial and trading institutions so that Africa would have market access for their products as well as access to financial resources. No attempt was made to excavate and carry out an archæology of neo-colonialism and imperialism from which South Africa had suffered under apartheid and which continued to subject the countries of the South to the whims of the North.

In our opinion, the “starting point” for MAP and later NEPAD was *not* to try to get a “commitment” from the African leaders to engage with globalisation with a view to doing things differently, but to question and demand the dismantling of those structures of economic and political relations between the North and the South that made African “sustainable development” almost impossible. Such an approach would have enabled African leaders to join with other countries of the South to demand a restructuring of the Bretton Woods system and the WTO as a precondition for Africa and the South generally engaging with globalisation on a relatively favourable basis. We will return to this point below, but suffice to say here that the MAP-NEPAD was far from addressing the real causes of the burning problems Africa was facing.

No wonder that some Heads of State have begun to question the right of the “developing partners” to demand “good governance” as a basis for economic cooperation with Africa and other parts of the South. President Ben Mkapa of Tanzania was one such leader. Addressing participants in a four-day Symposium organised by the Mwalimu Nyerere

Foundation in Kampala on April 11th 2002, on peace and conflict resolution in the Great Lakes region, President Mkapa asked: “When development aid or loans are made conditional to certain domestic decisions regarding political, economic, or social systems, is this a breach of the United Nations Charter (on sovereignty), or is it not.”

He added that “when powers so far away from our region coerce us under threats of suspension of aid, to live up to images they want and policies they formulate” is to deny countries their political independence. He said: “The way things are going, we in Africa will soon have no image beyond geography, no identity besides colour and no decency except flags. ... A decent nation has an image to portray and protect, an image that bestows an identity and dignity, worthy of defending.” President Mkapa was here clearly referring to the NEPAD and such other injunctions that were being imposed on African states by the “donors.” In a veiled reference to the suspension of Zimbabwe from the commonwealth by other African leaders at the behest of the British, Mkapa warned: “worse, we will end up competing to do the master’s urging in the neighbourhood.” [Mkapa, “Mkapa Blames West” in *New Vision*, Kampala, April 13, 2002].

On the issue of Zimbabwe, the Senegalese minister of foreign affairs, Cheikh Tidiane Gadio, expressed the dilemma facing the African leaders when he stated that instead of lamenting on the sidelines, African leaders had decided to be the authors of their own history and “for that we have to take care of situations like the one in Zimbabwe”. He said: “When I’m blamed for the situation in Zimbabwe it doesn’t bother me that much. I understand that people are reminding Africa - ‘You made a *global* commitment to good governance.’” At the same time, Gadio expressed impatience with Western critics of Africa: “How can the Senegalese people, the Malian people be held accountable for what happened in Zimbabwe?” This was the dilemma, which NEPAD had created for these leaders.

It is this pressure, which is also behind the creation of the “African peer Review mechanism.” The mechanism was adopted by the NEPAD Implementing Committee in Abuja in March 2002 and is to be revisited at the AU Summit in Pretoria, South Africa, in July 2002. According to the Communiqué issued in Abuja, the “Peer Mechanism” will operate “separately from the political process and structures.” The Communiqué also asked the Summit in Pretoria to define and refine “a continental position on unconstitutional change.” All these demands were being made as part of the demand for “good governance” by foreign powers. They were not changes being demanded by the African people themselves, not was there evidence that this is what they desired. Such changes cannot be sustainable in the long-run.

Globalisation, the NEPAD and the Role of Civil Society

It is then clear that the new imperialism, which holds itself out as a process of “globalisation” has to be tackled in the way that can expose its true nature rather than obscure its real intentions by referring to it as a “backlash” as Mbeki did. The African leaders have been arm-twisted to accept globalisation as “inevitable.” This is because when questions are asked about its implications for the marginalized communities of the world, these leaders are quick to ask: “What is the alternative?” Indeed, at the initial stages of the liberalisation and privatisation drive in the early 1980s, Margaret Thatcher had devised a dictum called: **TINA**-There Is No Alternative! Professor Yash Tandon once retorted to her dictum with his own dictum: **TAHA**-There Are Hundreds of Alternatives!

Recently, a former Chief Economist of the World Bank, Joseph Stiglitz, added his voice to those voices that have demanded the need for alternatives in the development agenda. In his speech entitled: “Towards a New Paradigm in Development Strategies: Policies and Processes”, Stiglitz pointed to the two-pronged approach to governance. He said that while on the one hand; it was true to state that without good public governance, there can be no growth, yet it was also true on the other, that good corporate governance is essential if there has to be growth. In the words of the President of the World Bank: “free markets cannot work behind closed doors.” NEPAD focuses on the former and obscures the need for the latter.

Therefore in focussing on the NEPAD as African scholars and civil society, we need to address the issue of global governance if our intervention is to be fruitful. This is crucial if we have to overcome the weaknesses that were exhibited at the WTO meeting at Doha at which African leaders were arm-twisted to accept the position of the United States for a new round of talks on the four “Singapore Issues”, when all along up to that point, they had worked together with civil society to refuse to accept a new round of talks on new issues such as labour standards and the environment when the old issues such as TRIPS and TRIMS had not been resolved.

This demonstrated that without the pressure of strong civil society at a global level, African issues couldn't be handled in a democratic manner. So instead of regarding demonstrations against the WTO and economic globalisation as “backlashes,” we have to defer with Mbeki to demand that the old economic order must be dismantled instead of compromising with it if we are to address the kind of issues that NEPAD raises. In short, the demand for “good governance” in Africa must be addressed within the same process of

establishing global corporate “good governance” in institutions such as the WTO, the IMF and the World Bank.

Firstly, civil society must insist that African recovery advocated by NEPAD cannot in fact be achieved under existing global conditions. It is necessary to challenge the idea that global economic integration is “inevitable” nor even desirable in itself. It has to be realised that the present “marginalisation” of the continent is a consequence of its enforced integration rather than its exclusion from the world market, as we have shown above. It has also to be realised that the present globalisation process-the new imperialism- is not a market-driven phenomenon, but a historical-political process, which is highly state-regulated through undemocratic institutions like the Bretton Woods system and the WTO. It is also a power-based and power-driven system, which is effectively rendered by violence of the United States. Therefore to argue that the present system can be “reformed” is to believe that by simply reversing the process we can change globalisation!

Secondly, it is important for the African civil society to work for a new world. At the last World Social Forum organised by civil society in Porto Alegre, the slogan of civil society was: “Another world is possible.” Our duty as an African civil society is to dispel illusions of the mainstream state-sponsored agendas, which advocates the extension of the same neo-liberal agenda under different slogans such as the NEPAD and demand and fight for another world. Under neo-liberal globalisation development has been placed in a straitjacket. Instead of globalising benefiting all the world’s people, the present order has globalised poverty rather than development; violating rather than respecting the national sovereignty of states. Instead of promoting solidarity between peoples, neo-liberal globalisation continues to advocate the unequal competition of the marketplace. Each person looks only to his/her own interests rather than promoting solidarity amongst peoples. Such a model cannot promote social cohesion, stability and peace in the world. On the other hand, a people-propelled transformation in which the local knowledge of all communities is used is possible and must be pursued.

Thirdly, we should expose all the illusions that economic globalisation promotes “growth” or “development.” As we have already argued above, there is no causal relationship between increases in capital flows and economic growth, nor is there one between increased trade and development. This should dispose of the illusion that African countries need more direct foreign investment for their economic growth or that Africa needs trade instead of aid. Both propositions are false. To give an example, since the growth of the financial sector under globalisation that has taken place since mid-1980s, growth of the world economy between 1975 and 1998 amounted to less than half of what had been attained between 1945 and 1975 in the period of Keynesian policies of market regulation and the active participation of the state in the economy [Castro, 2002].

Therefore it cannot be true that state interference in the market explains Africa's decline in the mid-1970s since with the growth in "open markets" since mid-1980s to which Africa was forced, there has been no corresponding growth in the African economies. On the contrary, there has been a further decline below that of the 1970s under liberalisation and privatisation. We are not here arguing for an active role for the post-colonial state. All we are doing is to point out the facts.

Fourth, economic globalisation has not taken place in conditions of free markets. On the contrary, countries that have opened more to western pressures have suffered, while those which closed certain sectors of their economies such as China, have shown high levels of economic growth. As further example of this statement, all the developed capitalist countries with vast resources and economic surpluses have never opened their entire economies to the outside world.

All of them have engaged in agricultural protectionism over the last sixty years. Such protectionism has meant that inefficient agricultural producers in these countries have not been subjected to market pressures and discipline. Instead they have been rewarded by subsidies amounting to about \$ 9 billion dollars per day in the European Union alone. Such countries cannot insist that African countries should be "accountable" and "transparent" in their governance while they maintain their own non-transparency.

Fifthly, apart from agriculture, other industries such as textiles, clothing, and even U. S. steel are highly protected by the developed world against the poor countries. According to Oxfam, the export earnings of the countries of the South could rise by over \$ 127 billion if the rich countries, which protect these industries, were to open them to exports from the poor countries. Moreover, agriculture, textiles, clothing and leather products are the sectors in which Africa and other poor countries have a "comparative advantage." Is NEPAD correct to insist that under these conditions, Africa has a "comparative advantage" because of her ownership of certain natural resources in the face of these realities in order to attract investment from the very countries that do not respect "free trade."?

Instead of going on our knees to beg for investment, African leaders should insist that economies of the North have neither economic rationality nor any moral basis for claiming that economic globalisation benefits everyone and that expansion of world investments and trade will lead to greater economic growth and development. Civil society must strongly refute such claims and be part of society to define new parameters for a real sustainable development that goes beyond mainstream definitions and paradigms.

Finally, African scholars and civil society should not try to tail themselves behind agendas set by the new imperialism, which try to incorporate "civil society" and "other stakeholders" into mainstream programs of domination such as the NEPAD. Our task is to be critical and radical in analysing society if indeed our objective is to bring about social

transformation in our societies. Research in societies like ours must seek to emancipate and empower the marginalized to fight for their rights for self-transformation. We cannot carry out this if at the same time, we apply to be part of the implementation of new programmes of the new imperialism and its agencies such as the NEPAD.

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