

ASSESSING OPPORTUNITIES AND FORMULATING
NEW APPROACHES: NEPAD -- THE NEW
PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

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Executive Summary

At the onset of the 21st Century the leaders of Africa have produced the blueprint for a new partnership for development in the continent, the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). This partnership proposes a reexamination of the socio-economic and political insertion of the region in the community of nations. More specifically this document presents to the people of Africa, the governments of the technically advanced countries and the multilateral mediator organizations such as the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO, a new set of objectives, goals and expectations for international trade, debt-reduction, access to technical and financial aid, support for conflict-resolution initiatives, material and political support for implementation of strategies to curb HIV/AIDS and other infections diseases and support for nation-building efforts such as initiation and enhancement of human and physical infrastructure and institutions and processes of governance.

There are **two principal objectives** to this paper, the first objective is to critically examine the framework of the New Partnership for Africa (NEPAD), the objectives, goals and expectations of both, the union and its individual partners. The second objective is to briefly examine the strategies proposed to pursue the global goals of this partnership, their constraints and feasibilities in the context of the latest era of globalization and the anti-terrorist campaign that characterizes the foreign policy of the United States, a key player in the international system in this new era.

Introduction

At the onset of the 21st Century the leaders of Africa have produced the blueprint for a new partnership for development in the continent, the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). This partnership proposes a reexamination of the socio-economic and political insertion of the region in the community of nations. More specifically this document presents to the people of Africa, the governments of the technically advanced countries and the multilateral mediator organizations such as the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO, a new set of objectives, goals and expectations for international trade, debt-reduction, access to technical and financial aid, support for conflict-resolution initiatives, material and political support for implementation of strategies to curb HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases and support for nation-building efforts such as initiation and enhancement of human and physical infrastructure and institutions and processes of governance.

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The Framework

As globalization races ahead Africa leaders proposed NEPAD partnership will intensify the undergoing major transformations. There is expansion and growth of democratic governments' side-by-side significant economic reforms. Yet, this is one of the regions of the world where we can expect poverty to increase during the coming decade. The number of countries still struggling with civil unrest, high population growth rates, large and increasing debt burdens, an HIV/AIDS pandemic that is decimating their work force and very minimal investment flows, is large. If we focus on the Sub-Saharan region, the part of Africa that present the biggest challenge, we can see that thirty-five of the forty-eight countries are classified as low-income countries, that is they have a per/capita GNP of US \$700 or less. And in this era of

globalisation, of increasing interdependence, most of Africa is not part of the global economy. About one-third of Africa's countries are not yet part of the World Trade Organization.

Conditions for successful, African country participation in NEPAD

- The articulation of the partnership must be based on collaborative advantages there must be a compelling shared vision and sense of purpose.
- There must be a shared understanding and definition of the problems and in the strategies to be implemented.
- The formulation of strategies must build upon existing, successful infrastructure and processes in the member countries whenever possible.

In the case of NEPAD these preliminary conditions have been met. All the African governments, through their mediating body, the OAU-AU, have participated in the elaboration and ratified the document that initiates NEPAD.

Additional conditions for successful country participations in NEPAD

- There must be shared leadership, not only in the elaboration of the strategies but in their implementation and evaluation phases as well. That is, strong, skillful cooperative guidance of NEPAD is vital.
- The specific plans and programs must contain clear guidelines for the use of methodologies, organizational innovations, specific social and natural habitats, new technologies and the diverse groups that will use them.
- There must be an imbedded interdependence and complementary in all strategies formulated to rationalize participation.

- Each plan must contain an explicit and articulated cost-effective division of responsibilities among participants.
- Cross-country and cross-regions shared outcomes. That is, all participant members must feel the results.
- A mechanism to insure power equity and mutual accountability must be an integral part of every strategy undertaken by NEPAD.

These additional conditions are yet to be met as they relate to the implementation phase of this continent-wide initiative, but they are crucial for its success.

Confronted with the NEPAD scenario it is necessary to revamp our traditional approaches to development. To formulate adequate and efficient policies for Africa that can allow this region to take advantage of the increasing integration of the world, we have to work with integrated, multidimensional and dynamic new approaches.

In Africa today the number of people falling below the line of extreme poverty is large and growing—this is affecting not just incomes but education and health outcomes as well. Indeed, the latest assessment undertaken by the World Bank indicates that unless current trends are reversed, the broadly supported goals, including reducing by half the proportion of people living in extreme poverty (less than one dollar a day) by 2015—will not be met. Why is this important for development? Experts agreed that no programs, no strategy for development, be it countrywide or region-wide can be successful if the problem of poverty is not resolved first. In addition, given the growing numbers of the poor this dimension of the problem is growing in importance. More to the point, for poverty to be reduced, and eventually eliminated, and for development to be effectively sustainable, there must be a dynamic balance between policies and actions that promote jobs creation, decent standards of living and a better management of the physical environment. That is, the patterns of growth have to be inclusive, have to benefit all members of society, especially those that need it the most. We have to insure that poor, children, women and minorities have access to the health care, the education and social and economic opportunities they need to experience. This is, of course an enormous task for any society, more so for Africa today.

On the relevance of growth as a necessary condition for development

Economic growth matters because it betters the lot of the poor and reduces the proportion of people who are poor (Easterly, 2002). According to UN ECA (1999), the late

1990s and 2000-2001 performance of Africa's economies shows significant improvements. While in the 1980s and early 1990s, income per capita declined consistently for all countries, since the mid-1990s, however, this trend was reversed in a number of countries. Nevertheless, the growth rates registered in the past few years are much below the rates (about seven percent) required to have a significant impact on poverty reduction. Thus, if Africa is to reduce the incidence of poverty by half by 2015 as proposed in the International Development Goals, it needs to achieve and sustain a growth rate of seven percent per year. Moreover, for Africa to benefit from participation in globalized markets, the following conditions must be met: macroeconomic and structural policies that hinder competitiveness have to be addressed, socioeconomic conditions of the poor must improve and suboptimal relations with its major trade partners must be revised.

Structural problems: Africa

One controversial aspect of any strategy of growth in Africa is trade liberalization. This refers to the need for the countries in Africa to import capital and consumer goods in order to generate sustained and sustainable growth. This is viewed as the first structural problem, high import tariffs, which have effectively been a constraint on imports. These tariffs, which average 25 percent, are three times higher than those of the fast growing exporters and more than four times the developing country average, World Bank (1999). Non-tariff barriers also remain high in Africa. Furthermore, the sustainability of capital and consumer goods imports can be guaranteed only if African exports grow at a fast rate. Yet to this date, export levels in Africa remains below the rates needed. That is, African countries exports have grown at less than half the rate of growth of other developing countries. In fact, Africa's share in world exports declined from 3.9 percent in 1980 to 1.5 percent in 1997. Several factors contribute to this poor performance: the region's inability to maintain its market share in the production of key primary commodities, lack of diversification in its exports, the persistence of protectionism in the trade of key commodities, and previously overvalued exchange rates. All these play an adverse role on agricultural exports, the most important export product for most African economies.

Structural Problems: Trading partners of Africa

Another important aspect that needs further discussion, and one that cannot be overstated, is the fact that Africa faces high protectionism with respect to its exports to the developed country markets. This is undoubtedly, the single most damaging hurdle for Africa's

growth, which is not in African control. Based on a recent World Bank study, if all trade barriers to African exports in Canada, the European Union (EU), Japan, and the United States (US) were eliminated, non-oil exports would expand by 14 percent. It is also estimated that greater access to the agricultural markets of developed countries would increase real incomes in Africa by US \$6 per person per year by enabling producers to sell their commodities at higher prices and in greater volumes. Therefore, it is crucial for developed countries to lower their own effective protection to African exports, especially on agricultural products, in order to contribute to a more effective, growth-conducive policy in African countries. And while multilateral settings work best to negotiate, recent initiatives to provide duty-and quota-free access to the exports of poor countries could be extended as widely as possible.

The Gender Imperative

About one quarter the world's population, live in extreme poverty. Of these, 1.3 billion people, 70 percent are women. This means they survive on the equivalent of less than a dollar a day. About seventeen percent are in sub-Saharan Africa. They lack access to opportunities and services. They feel isolated and excluded by ethnicity, caste, geography, gender or disability. These poorest among the poor, lack information and access to health and education. They are the ones we need to reach first, because poor people, especially women are the most vulnerable to all forms of violence and abuse including domestic violence, crime and civil conflict, and in very many cases, systems of justice and government services do not protect them.

Rural women in particular, form a growing proportion of the very poor, a trend referred to as the "feminization of poverty". Household food security, particularly among children in poor countries, is vitally affected by women's access to income-generating technologies and effective institutional and legal protection. Therefore, there must be an over program for Africa that incorporate gender analysis within all the development strategies of NEPAD. Gender analysis of proposed and actual outcomes of policy is an important tool for ensuring that user participation includes women. Moreover, Gender analysis goes to the heart of participatory strategies for growth and development because it addresses a key issue: Who exactly should participate? In helping to answer that question, gender analysis can contribute to the efficiency of the proposed strategies. Gender analysis can also help ensure that proposed policy takes issues of equity into account.

Education, the key to any social mobility and successful civic participation, also has a profound influence in the participation of women in the work place and in the home. Formal

education fosters the use of new technologies so necessary in these globalized and interconnected times, for health, nutrition and contraception, all of these are crucial to insuring success in growth strategies. It also fosters agricultural innovation and creativity, areas of greater female participation in Africa, both of which are needed to overcome poverty and lack of development. Those women with a higher level of formal education and training are quicker to adapt more efficient techniques that can maximize production or cut costs and teach via example to others. Unfortunately, women do not base their education decisions on all the potential for social gains. Here is a case where incentives as part of an overall strategy play a role. It is then for governments, given all the examples of positive externalities, to increase their investment in public education.

This has not always been the case. While in the past three decades many countries in Africa have made important inroads in expanding enrollment at all levels some old problems persists and new emerge. Perhaps the most glaring case is that education has not been evenly distributed among the population nor has it always been inclusive of girls. Compounding these oversights is the fact that the poor in most African countries get considerable less than their fair share of government spending. Indeed statistics show that education spending is together with health spending, among the most regressive public policies. These are information inputs that have to be integral part of NEPAD.

Governance and Development

According to Oden (2201), good governments are essential to insure the success of any development strategy, so much so that to improve governmental efficiency is to improve the lives of the poor directly.

The stated objective of NEPAD is to give impetus to the continent's development by bridging existing gaps between Africa and the developed world. This concept is at the heart of NEPAD. The question here is not just to secure financing for a broad range of projects

Africa considers itself to be a part of the globalization process. Because of Africa's continued marginalization, however, the continent today holds only 1.7 per cent of international trade; Africa is the last continent in terms of growth and development; and it is the poorest region in the world.

However in policy prescription statements, "African leaders are concerned, [that] Africa is active in the globalization process because [of the] development of the world economy [and]-

- the United States and Europe -- is, by many historic accounts, the result of the exploitation of the continent's raw materials, the labor of its people, and its commodity exports."

NEPAD has, in fact, chosen to focus on the region as a primary operational sphere rather than the African State in its current boundaries. Its founders argue that the development framework of the "State" has been hampered by the narrowness of their economic areas. NEPAD has, therefore, chosen to elaborate its projects in ten sectors in each of the continent's five regions: West Africa North Africa, Central Africa, East Africa, Southern Africa and Madagascar.

NEPAD's stated priorities

NEPAD ten priorities that the crafter refer to as sectors, and they are as follows:

1. *Good public governance*: democracy embodies free and fair elections as well as democratic institutions, respect for human rights, rights of women and children, and transparency in public management
2. *Good governance of the private economy* in order to increase capital flows in a country characterized by an independent and fair judicial system in lawsuits involving foreign investors, and transparency in management of private companies, etc.
3. *Infrastructure*: roads, railroads, ports and airports, and transportation are all elements of production costs weighing heavily on the capacity of African export commodities to compete abroad. Sound infrastructure is key to generating economic opportunities.
4. *Education*: today, it seems that human resources are the most important growth factor: creativity, inventiveness, and productivity. States with no natural resources like Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore have shown that a poor country can essentially embark on economic growth and development by investing massively in education and training.
5. *Health* is an important component for Africa's development, especially in view of its very high mortality rate caused by endemic diseases, malaria, tuberculosis and

AIDS. Good health is a prerequisite for productivity in a population. Unhealthy conditions lead to unnecessary expenses. Good health, then, becomes Africa's priority.

6. *New Information and Communication Technologies*: access must be made available to Africans beginning during their childhood years, and must be expanded to all sectors, including agriculture, industry, transportation, education, trade, and other services.
7. *Agriculture*: Africa is far behind in agricultural innovation. The continent is today dependent on food from abroad. This is unacceptable in view of the fact that the continent has immense lands and numerous rivers.
8. *Environment*: the fight against the degradation of the environment is multi-pronged: natural phenomena such as drought, desertification, and coastal erosion; and man-made damage in areas around communities. This sector, which requires major financial resources, is a top priority for the international community.
9. *Energy*: as an integral part of development, it seems that some African countries do not have workable natural energy. African countries plan to build pipelines to ensure their supply in energy.
10. *Access to markets of developed countries*: the international community just stated that the foundation of development lies in agriculture rather than industrialization without local capacity building. In this regard, the founders state:

Since the meeting of the World Trade Organization was held last year in Doha, Qatar, a series of discussions has been held between the G8 and African countries. We hope that western markets will open up for competition with African products. The Africa Growth Opportunity Act (AGOA), which allows some eligible countries to benefit from its program, is a good example of how this can be done. Discussions are also on going with the European Union. However, these perspectives will only become reality if they benefit from massive investment, especially in the areas of infrastructure, knowledge transfer and irrigation. African agriculture must also attract foreign capital.

What paradigm(s) inform(s) the proposed partnerships?

Economic and sociological modernization theoretical constructs inform the rationale for the partnerships. The main planning and policy assumptions are the mobilization of domestic/regional and foreign resources around a largely regional industrialization strategy. It is presumed that a 7% growth rate will emanate or is necessary for the partnership to be successful. The NEPAD partnership overall strategy will work parallel with other similar partnership and strategies.

In this context, it is imperative to have the basic human and physical infrastructure in place to insure the first phases of the development process are taking place. Thus, we must be able to generate public policy that guarantees more efficiency in the provision of basic public goods such as public education, public health, access to means of communication and information, and access to safe water and safe food. The formulation of public policies such as these requires the coordination of the effort of several parties: governmental efforts at all levels: bilateral and multilateral organizations, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector.”

Partnership and the Continuing Quest for Development

In Africa today the number of people falling below the line of extreme poverty is large and growing—this is affecting not just incomes but education and health outcomes as well. Indeed, the latest assessment undertaken by the World Bank indicates that unless current trends are reversed, the broadly supported goals, including reducing by half the proportion of people living in extreme poverty (less than one dollar a day) by 2015—will not be met.

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social and economic opportunities they need to experience development under the proposed NEPAD partnership. This is a huge task for any society, more so for Africa today.

To what extent can the proposed partnerships enhance poverty eradication and empowerment of women?

Development means improving the life chances of people. It is presumed that the improvement of the conditions of life requires the effective use of resources in producing the material basis for life. Development is a multidimensional, dynamic process of social transformation that takes place over time. It does not happen within the lifespan of one generation.

Poverty and lack of development are two sides of the same coin. Therefore, an integrated, comprehensive approach to development and a multidimensional view of poverty are necessary.

The pay-off for society, the rate of social return of the investment in those most disenfranchised: women, children, minorities, the poorer among the poor, are high.

To effectively reduce poverty in a framework of sustainable development we need sustained growth with overt participation of those most disenfranchised.

Critical for sustainable development is the need for the direction of the process to be in the hands of the country in which multiple parts development efforts are been implemented.

Because absolute poverty will hinder any development program in Africa, it is imperative to ensure that the social agenda of each country involved, places poverty alleviation and eradication as overt priorities.

- The formulation of this partnership should include provisions for the effective participation of women and other non-traditional groups that are among the poor such as ethnic minorities. Forging partnership among these often-excluded groups within communities is vital.

- The formulation of NEPAD will require developing working women and gender partnerships in rural and urban, within and across countries, between governmental and non-governmental, across private and public sectors and with other members of the international development community.

A built-in mechanism for regular evaluation of our targeted goals should be in place led by a cross cutting and representative groups of African male and female personnel.

The Challenge

How to build the physical and human infrastructure necessary to attain sustainable development in a region with emerging economies and relatively new civil societies.

Sustainability for our purposes is defined as the capability of creating the conditions for sustainable improvements in the quality of life for all people. Furthermore, it is insuring that the resources we use today will be here tomorrow. We know the necessary conditions for sustainable development to take place. They are:

- Established, efficient and regular institutions and processes
- Transparent institutions of governance
- Enforcement capacity for existing laws, rules and regulations
- Reliable sources of investment
- Efficient agricultural, industrial and service sectors
- Clear access to the world economy

Confronted with the proposed scenario it is necessary to revamp our traditional approaches to national/region reconstruction and development. To formulate adequate and efficient policies for Africa that can allow this region to take advantage of the increasing integration of the world, we have to work with integrated, multidimensional and dynamic new approaches.

We know that as a goal sustainable development is, as we stated above, multidimensional, that is, among other characteristics, it has many objectives. Also, we know that public policies created to promote sustainable development are by necessity, interdependent. Furthermore, we know that elected governments play a decisive role in creating

the conditions to insure that sustainable development can be achieved. Therefore, governments, the administrative capabilities and the leadership they can provide are vital to this process. Transparent and open institutions of governance are indeed key to make the processes accessible and productive for all citizens.

Another important lesson from past experiences is that the goal of achieving sustainable development is not easy and definitely is not inevitable. The past three decades are overshadowed by many failures that force us today to critically examine what have worked and what have not.

The proposed partnership provides for mobilization and organization of resources by and at the executive levels of African governments working with European, North American and Asian heads of state and financial and investment leaders from the same regions. The challenge of the partnership is to mobilize all the citizens, organizations and resources in a free and open society to contribute their complete human potential toward successful outcomes at the national and regional levels.

The founders recognize that NEPAD does not exist in a vacuum. There are many initiatives and processes on the ground already, e.g. the UN Millennium Declaration, the G-8 Okinawa Declaration, the Copenhagen Declaration, the Skagen Declaration, the Contonou Agreement, the EU/Cairo Plan of Action, AGOA, TICAD, the Sino-African process, etc. It is emphasized that that NEPAD does not seek to compete with thee, but rather to consciously establish linkages and synergies between NEPAD and these initiatives, and to see where each initiatives can make the greatest contributions. In essence, NEPAD provides the focal point and the overall strategic framework for engagement as Africa's chosen agenda for development.

As proposed the partnership seems to envision a new and emerging African society moving towards the development of a civil society, transparent processes of governance and the development of educational, health, public and private sectors organizations and legal rules and frameworks that will intensify human resource development and an enhanced business and investment climate.

The NEPAD partnership offers unprecedented opportunities for African peoples and societies in the changing context of the early 21st century. The transition of the many opportunities into development that will increase the life chances for all of its citizens it the major challenge. We must all join together to work towards the achieving of these goals.

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