

FROM CRISIS TO RENEWAL: TOWARDS A SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT

KEMPE RONALD HOPE, SR

ABSTRACT

Africa's new generation of enlightened leaders have promulgated an initiative to spur growth and reduce poverty on the continent. Entitled the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), it is couched within five core principles — good governance; entrenchment of democracy, peace and security; sound economic policy-making and execution; productive partnerships; and domestic ownership and leadership — which are seen as the preconditions for Africa's renewal. This article analytically describes and assesses the NEPAD initiative, and the challenges to be confronted for its successful implementation as the road map guiding the journey to make the twenty-first century one of peace, democracy, development, and prosperity for Africa.

DURING THE PAST DECADE AND BEYOND, AFRICA HAS BEEN DESCRIBED by various authors as a continent betrayed, in chaos, in self-destruction, in crisis, existing in name only, being predatory or kleptocratic, or collapsed into anarchy and viciousness.¹ These are but a few of the colourful negative images painted about a region that, up to now, seemed to have lacked the capacity and willingness to come to grips with the need to develop, own, and implement a sustained policy and institutional environment conducive to, among other things, good governance, entrenchment of democracy, peace and security, growth and development, and poverty reduction. Of course, all of the negative images have been, and, in many ways, continue to be, accurate. However, a new generation of enlightened African leaders has now decided to stake Africa's claim to the twenty-first century. In that

Kempe Ronald Hope, Sr is the Senior Policy Adviser in the Cabinet Office of the Executive Secretary at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The views expressed here are his own and not necessarily those of the UNECA.

1. See, for example, George B. N. Ayittey, *Africa Betrayed* (St Martin's Press, New York, 1993); George B. N. Ayittey, *Africa in Chaos* (St Martin's Press, New York, 1998); Susan Rose-Ackerman, *Corruption and Government: Causes, consequences, and reform* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999); Kempe Ronald Hope, Sr, *From Crisis to Renewal: Development policy and management in Africa* (Brill Academic Publishers, Leiden, 2002); Kempe Ronald Hope, Sr and Bornwell C. Chikulo (eds), *Corruption and Development in Africa: Lessons from country case-studies* (Palgrave, London, 1999); and Peter Schwab, *Africa: A continent self-destructs* (Palgrave, New York, 2001).

regard, among other things, they have promulgated a framework plan entitled the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to move the continent forward from its current state of crisis to one of renewal, bringing with it a better way of life for all Africans.

The NEPAD was previously known as the New African Initiative (NAI). It is a consolidation of two proposals — the Millennium Partnership for the African Recovery Programme (MAP), which had its driving force in Presidents Mbeki of South Africa, Bouteflika of Algeria and Obasanjo of Nigeria, and the OMEGA Plan for Africa which was conceived and sponsored by President Wade of Senegal. It also draws on the *Compact for African Recovery: Operationalizing the Millennium Partnership for the African Recovery Programme* which was prepared by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa following a request emanating from the African Ministers of Finance Conference held in Addis Ababa in November 2000.²

This article analytically describes and assesses the NEPAD initiative, and the challenges to be confronted for its successful implementation as the road map guiding Africa's journey to make the twenty-first century a truly African one, a century which, according to President Mbeki of South Africa, will be seen by historians as one in which 'Africa has at last emerged from a long period of darkness and fear into one of light and a dream fulfilled',³ an Africa where 'through our persistent efforts we have redefined ourselves into something other than a place of suffering, a place of wars, a place of oppression, a place of hunger, disease, ignorance, and backwardness'.⁴ In particular, the continent will be regarded as having demonstrated 'the reality of a new African, who having refused to be conditioned by circumstances imposed by a past of slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, and apartheid, has succeeded to create a new world of peace, democracy, development, and prosperity'.⁵

2. In July 2001, at the Lusaka summit of the Organization of African Unity, African leaders endorsed the merger of the MAP and the OMEGA Plan into a single programme which became known as the NAI. In October 2001, at their implementation committee meeting in Abuja, the African leaders agreed to rename the initiative as the NEPAD. See also UNECA, *Compact for African Recovery: Operationalizing the Millennium Partnership for the African Recovery Programme* (UNECA, Addis Ababa, 2001). A chronological history of the documents developed in the lead-up to the NEPAD can be found at www.uneca.org; www.africanrecovery.org; and www.gov.za/issues/nepad.htm.

3. Thabo Mbeki, 'New partnership for Africa's development and African union', Address to the Joint Sitting of the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces, Pretoria, 31 October 2001, p. 1.

4. Mbeki, 'New partnership', p. 1.

5. *Ibid.*

The NEPAD imperative

Before the NEPAD, the African landscape had been littered with many failed initiatives, development plans, and other programmes of action. Those initiatives, such as the Lagos Plan of Action in the 1980s, for example, failed to be implemented for a number of reasons, including the lack of political commitment, lack of synergy with required political and economic reforms, lack of ownership, lack of political will, and lack of resources.⁶ They were also extensively driven and influenced by the politics of the Cold War era. 'For decades, the United States, the Soviet Union, and France propped up dictators who served their interests [rather than the interests of their fellow Africans] — men like Ethiopia's Mengistu Haile Mariam, Somalia's Mohamed Siad Barre, Rwanda's Juvénal Habyarimana, and the former Zaire's Mobutu Sese Seko.'⁷

The NEPAD, on the other hand, represents a pledge by African leaders, based on a common vision and 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, and at the same time to participate actively in the world economy and body politic. It is therefore anchored on the determination of Africans to extricate themselves and the continent from the malaise of underdevelopment and exclusion in a globalizing world. In other words, it is an attempt at a homegrown solution to overcoming Africa's marginalization in the world economy and international affairs, while improving the standard of living of the African people.

Poverty is a particularly disturbing phenomenon in Africa. Despite being one of the most richly endowed regions in the world, the continent remains the poorest. Growth rates in recent years have been positive, recovering from an average of 2.5 percent in the 1980s to 3.1 percent in the late 1990s and 3.5 percent in 2000. Nonetheless, this recovery has also been noted as being fragile.⁸ It has not been underpinned by strong domestic savings, and the rates of growth still need to surpass the 5 percent level needed to prevent an increase in the number of poor people.⁹ Basically, at the turn of the century, per capita income in sub-Saharan Africa was 10 percent below

6. See I. Aluko-Olokun, 'The new partnership for African development', 2001 mimeo., p. 1; Nicholas van de Walle, *African Economies and the Politics of Permanent Crisis, 1979–1999* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001), pp. 18–19; and Hope, *From Crisis to Renewal*, pp. 82–99.

7. Dan Connell and Frank Smyth, 'Africa's new bloc', *Foreign Affairs* 77, 2 (March/April 1998), p. 80.

8. See UNCTAD, *Economic Development in Africa: Performance, prospects and policy issues* (United Nations, Geneva, 2001); UNECA, *Transforming Africa's Economies* (UNECA, Addis Ababa, 2001); and World Bank, 'Africa: regional context', *Issue Briefs*, September 2001, at www.worldbank.org.

9. World Bank, 'Africa'.

the level reached in 1980. Some countries, such as Botswana, Mozambique, and Uganda, for example, continue to do well with annual average growth rates exceeding 6 percent. However, on the whole, Africa's economic performance has remained well below the 6–7 percent growth rate target required to reduce poverty by one-half by 2015.¹⁰

In addition, the region is still plagued by high income inequality, resurgent conflicts and political upheavals, decaying infrastructure, the exclusion of many from basic services and from effective participation in the political process and the modern economy, a cascade of tropical medical ills and other diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, which are reversing many hard-won gains in life expectancy and other human development indices, food scarcities, crushing external debts, and scarce and sceptical private investors.

Preconditions for African renewal: NEPAD's core principles

The preconditions for Africa's renewal are captured in a set of core principles embedded in the NEPAD initiative. There are essentially five such core principles which can be grouped as described below.

Good governance. The first principle is the proper adherence to good corporate, economic, and political governance. Good governance, in all of its facets, has been demonstrated to be positively correlated with the achievement of better growth rates, and particularly through the building of institutions in support of markets.¹¹ As also recognized in the NEPAD framework, growth and development cannot be achieved in the absence of good governance. Among other things, good governance ensures the most efficient utilization of already scarce resources in the promotion of development; promotes the rule of law; enhances participation, responsibility, and accountability; and has the potential to emancipate people from poverty as state legitimacy is recognized and entrenched. As a matter of fact, any effort to reduce poverty must start with and build upon good governance.

Although volumes have been written about political governance in Africa, very little can be found with respect to economic and corporate governance on the continent. The NEPAD therefore adds value in this area and must be commended for candidly coming to grips with this principle as a significant precondition for the renewal of Africa. African states need to commit

10. K. Y. Amoako, *Perspectives on Africa's Development* (United Nations, New York, 2000), pp. 35–7.

11. See, for example, William Easterly, *The Elusive Quest for Growth: Economists' adventures and misadventures in the tropics* (MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 2001); World Bank, *World Development Report 2002: Building institutions for markets* (Oxford University Press, New York, 2002); and Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kraay, and Pablo Zoido-Lobaton, *Governance Matters: From measurement to action*, Policy Research Working Paper No. 2196 (World Bank, Washington, DC, 1999).

to improving economic and corporate governance because this is part of their fundamental responsibilities to the people to whom they are answerable. Moreover, in the absence of good economic and corporate governance, private investment and productivity will continue to remain at relatively low levels. Weak governance and slow economic development go hand in hand, while improved governance contributes to growth and development.

Good economic governance entails, among other things, state capacity to engage in transparent management; to implement internationally acceptable standards and mechanisms related to public accountability in fiscal policy, public expenditure management, debt management, monetary policy, banking regulations, and data dissemination; and to develop and empower institutions to prevent and combat fraud and embezzlement of public funds and the laundering of ill-gotten gains or other monetary rewards. The motivation for improving economic governance in Africa is therefore based on the need to build and enhance a credible policy environment in which there is removal of deficiencies that contribute to unstable macroeconomic frameworks, non-transparent and inefficient fiscal, monetary, and regulatory policies, frequently unsustainable budget deficits, and wasteful expenditure and imbalances in sectoral allocations. All of these factors tend to exacerbate the poverty and severe income inequalities that characterize many African states.¹²

Corporate governance refers to the mechanisms through which corporations — whether private, publicly traded, or state-owned — and their managers are governed. It involves a set of relationships among a company's management, its board, its shareholders, and its other stakeholders, and also provides the structure through which the objectives of a company are set and the means of attaining those objectives and the monitoring of performance are determined.¹³ Good corporate governance entails the pursuit of objectives by the board and management that represent the interests of a company and its shareholders, including effective monitoring and the efficient use of resources.

Good corporate governance is influenced by a number of factors, primary among which is the nature of the overall institutional and legal framework that has been established by governments to effect such good governance. If African countries are to benefit from private international capital flows, for example, then their corporate governance structures must be regarded as being internationally reputable and capable of instilling

12. See 'The Map Economic Governance Initiative' at www.africanrecovery.org.

13. Bengt Holmstrom and Steven N. Kaplan, 'Corporate governance and merger activity in the United States: making sense of the 1980s and 1990s', *Journal of Economic Literature* 15, 2 (Spring 2001), pp. 121–44; and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *OECD Principles of Corporate Governance* (OECD, Paris 1999).

confidence in both foreign and domestic investors. Fundamentally, the current complex informational and financial demands now evident as a result of globalization dictate that African states must strive towards more efficient and transparent systems of governance in all of its facets.¹⁴ Moreover, governments can no longer monopolize programme delivery and the processes that lead to economic growth, because they require the active participation of the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and such participation is likely to be more forthcoming and effective in an environment of good governance which embraces all relevant codes, principles, standards of internationally recognized best practices as well as institutional reforms, as set out in the NEPAD framework document. Those institutional reforms will focus on administrative and civil services; strengthening of parliamentary oversight; promotion of participatory decision-making; adoption of effective measures to combat corruption and embezzlement; the undertaking of judicial reforms; and the adoption of appropriate peer review mechanisms.

Entrenchment of democracy, peace and security. Apart from the evidenced fact that good governance is a necessary condition for achieving sustainable growth and development, it also contributes to a climate where democracy can be entrenched. The need to entrench democracy across the African continent is therefore also highlighted as a core principle of the NEPAD, along with the complementary need to create a climate of peace and security. Indeed, the NEPAD framework document recognizes a clear awareness that peace, security, and democracy are also necessary preconditions for attracting investment, garnering growth and development, and reducing poverty. It has also been argued elsewhere that 'success in the fight against poverty is key to stability and peace in the 21st century. And nowhere are the battle lines clearer than in Africa.'¹⁵ Moreover, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has said that Africa's potential can be realized, but first 'Africa must reject the ways of the past, and commit itself to building a future of democratic governance subject to the rule of law. Such a future is within our reach, I am convinced. But only on one condition: that we end Africa's conflict, without which no amount of aid or trade, assistance or advice, will make the difference.'¹⁶

14. Abdalla Hamdok, *Governance and Policy in Africa*, Discussion Paper No. 2001/126 (United Nations University/World Institute for Development Economics Research, Helsinki, 2001), p. 1.

15. Horst Köhler, 'A global partnership for African economic development', Address to the United Nations Economic and Social Council, Geneva, 16 July 2001, p. 1.

16. Kofi Annan, 'Address to the summit of the Organization of African Unity', Lusaka, 9 July 2001, pp. 5–6.

Entrenching peace and security is therefore of crucial importance to Africa. Currently, the peoples of a number of African countries are still faced with conflict and instability, and the consequences of conflict in one country frequently affect neighbouring countries, contributing towards general conditions of regional instability. Unresolved conflict in fact brings with it a host of regional ills, including the proliferation of small arms, light weapons and landmines; terrorism; refugees and internally displaced persons; trafficking in drugs and other illegal goods; and high levels of transnational crime. Measures will therefore be put in place and regional institutional mechanisms reinforced and/or agreed to for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict; peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peace enforcement; post-conflict reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction; and the combating of the illicit proliferation of small arms, light weapons, and landmines.

With respect to the entrenchment of democracy, the NEPAD demands that participating governments commit to a set of targeted initiatives, intended to contribute to the strengthening of their political and administrative frameworks in line with the principles of transparency, accountability, integrity, respect for human rights, and promotion of the rule of law. Commitments will therefore be sought for an undertaking to respect the global standards of democracy, the core components of which include political pluralism, allowing for the existence of various political parties and workers' unions, and the periodic organization of fair, open, free and democratic elections to enable the populace to freely choose their leaders.

The foregoing undertaking should also have the long-term effect of enlarging the space in which the peoples of Africa can exercise their rights and become empowered to participate in development and its benefits. It has the potential to create a relationship of trust, rather than cynicism and ill-will, between a people and their government and also to give governments the confidence to speak out against abuses of democratic and human rights elsewhere on the continent.

Sound economic policy-making and execution. Much has been written about the application of inappropriate and statist economic policies that have led to Africa's lost decade of the 1980s and a more-than-two-decades-old development crisis. Some progress was made in economic growth rates in the 1990s. However, as previously indicated, standards of living are still very low and current projections suggest that Africa will not be able to meet the international development targets set for the year 2015. The World Bank, for example, has calculated that, without a dramatic change in the pace of progress, Africa will miss most of those development targets by a wide margin. No African country is on

track for all the targeted goals and on no targeted goal are a majority of African countries on track.¹⁷

Sound economic policy-making and execution loom large therefore to make the benefits of the NEPAD a reality. According to the NEPAD framework document, this precondition for the renewal of Africa entails the restoration and maintenance of macroeconomic stability, especially by developing appropriate standards and targets for fiscal and monetary policies, and introducing appropriate institutional frameworks to achieve these standards. The NEPAD eloquently recognizes that African countries must reduce their dependence on foreign aid and seize the historic opportunity that has presented itself to end the scourge of underdevelopment that afflicts the continent, given that the resources (including capital, technology, and human skills), that are required to launch a war on poverty and underdevelopment, exist in abundance.

Essentially, and in the context of globalization, Africa needs to become more competitive. Economic liberalization needs to be deepened to encourage greater private sector activity. The statist policies of the past, with government intervention in almost every sector of the economy, have been disastrous, to say the least. Not only did these policies fail to improve living standards in Africa but they also scared away foreign investment — a critical ingredient for achieving growth, reducing unemployment, and eradicating poverty.

Within this strategy of economic liberalization — intended to enhance competition, unshackle markets, and assist in halting the marginalization of the continent — African countries must also give greater consideration to regional approaches to development. Regional co-operation and integration movements have proved successful in the rest of the world. In fact, one of the key trends in the market-oriented economies is the movement towards regional trading blocs. The European Union is expanding, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is being successfully implemented, and there are moves to establish a trading bloc of Pacific countries that will also include North and South American states. Africa's five regional co-operation and integration sub-groupings must therefore be strengthened and streamlined.

Integration into the world economy through regional integration and co-operation has proved to be a powerful means for countries to promote economic growth, development, and poverty reduction. Regional integration and co-operation also provide benefits and economies of scale in, among other things, the pooling of resources and risks, the harmonization

17. Nine quantitative goals were established for African countries at the 1998 Second Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD II). See the World Bank report by Gabriel Carceles, Birger Fredriksen, and Patrick Watt, *Can Africa Reach the International Targets for Human Development?* (World Bank, Washington, DC, 2001), pp. 2–3.

of investment policies and practices, and the rationalization of institutional frameworks for the provision of regional public goods such as the eradication of disease. Africa must give priority to revitalizing its regional co-operation and integration frameworks.

Productive partnerships. The penultimate core principle of the NEPAD, as a precondition for the renewal of Africa, is the development of a more productive partnership between Africa and its bilateral and multi-lateral partners. The overall objective is to improve effectiveness in development co-operation primarily through better practice in the aid relationship, delivery, and reporting systems. This new and better practice would set out mutually agreed performance targets and standards for both donor and recipient countries.

Indeed, the contemporary consensus on African development co-operation is that development partnerships work best where the aid regime devolves delivery systems, empowers local communities, and puts Africans in charge of their development efforts, with the development partners recognizing and supporting Africa's leadership and responsibility.¹⁸ Furthermore, the NEPAD also takes aim at the various partnership initiatives currently in place between Africa and the industrialized countries, as well as between Africa and multilateral institutions, with a view to rationalizing them and ensuring that real benefits to Africa flow from them. The outcome is envisaged as partnerships which produce for Africa benefits related to a reduction in the transaction costs associated with dealing with many donors, an enhanced predictability of aid flows for more effective expenditure planning, and the strengthening of local capacity to execute development projects.

The NEPAD focus on such productive partnerships with donors is also consistent with the views of internationally reputable and recognized commentators on African development problems. Indeed, some of those views seem to have had a significant influence on the framing of the NEPAD document. Jeffrey Sachs, for example, has argued that the international donor community should focus on those countries whose governments have demonstrated that they are committed to taking the steps needed to achieve rapid growth. Those steps include having established, or making extensive progress towards establishing, a market-oriented economy based on open trade and investment policies; the protection of property rights; supportive tax and expenditure policies; appropriate monetary, financial

18. See World Bank, *Can Africa Claim the 21st Century?* (World Bank, Washington, DC, 2000); and Shantayanan Devarajan, David R. Dollar, and Torgny Holmgren (eds), *Aid and Reform in Africa: Lessons from ten case studies* (World Bank, Washington, DC, 2001).

and exchange-rate policies; the control of corruption; and the explicit promotion of private sector activity, including the privatization of state-owned enterprises.¹⁹

Domestic ownership and leadership. To put it quite bluntly, no initiative for Africa's development, however well crafted and internationally accepted, can and/or will be successful if it is not owned by Africans themselves. The lessons of the failure of past initiatives points to an 'experience which shows that Africans must lead Africa out of poverty, and that the most effective policies and programs are those based on domestic processes of consultation and decision-making'.²⁰ This conclusion has been further substantiated by published research showing a significant positive correlation between the ownership of policy reforms and development outcomes in Africa.²¹ Ownership matters because it directly affects programme acceptance and implementation at the national and local levels. Domestic ownership generates political support and buy-ins by relevant stakeholders who are much more likely to view the initiative as a worthy indigenous one rather than immediately dismissing it as a foreign imposition.

This emphasis on domestic ownership is another value-added of the NEPAD, and a significant one that sets it apart from all previous plans and initiatives in support of Africa's development, although the development problems being addressed remain largely the same. Unlike past initiatives, which were primarily conceived and/or influenced from abroad, the NEPAD is a product of indigenous efforts and further demonstrates the emergence and presence of an enlightened political leadership offering African solutions to African problems. Moreover, African ownership signals African control of the projects, programmes, and processes, with African leaders openly and unequivocally accepting that they will play their part in their implementation. It cancels out the charge of 'intellectual poverty' in Africa and demonstrates to the international community that Africans can determine their own destiny within norms that are globally embraceable.

19. Jeffrey Sachs, 'A new partnership for growth in Africa', in Peter H. Koehn and Olatunde J. B. Ojo (eds), *Making Aid Work: Innovative approaches for Africa at the turn of the century* (University Press of America, Lanham, MD, 1999), pp. 157–89.

20. K. Y. Amoako, 'Fulfilling Africa's promise', Millennium Lecture at 10 Downing Street, London, 17 December 2001, p. 4.

21. See, for example, Clive Gray and Malcolm McPherson, 'The leadership factor in African policy reform and growth', *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 49, 4 (July 2001), pp. 707–40; and Yvonne M. Tsikata, *Owning Economic Reforms: A comparative study of Ghana and Tanzania*. Discussion Paper No. 2001/53 (United Nations University/World Institute for Development Economics Research, Helsinki, 2001), pp. 1–4.

The implementation mechanism

The implementation mechanism for the NEPAD further reflects the 'domestic ownership and leadership' core principle as a precondition for the renewal of Africa, and the seriousness that the new African leadership attaches to the initiative. At the administrative apex of the implementation structure is a Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC) consisting of 15 members including the five nations that initiated and promoted the NEPAD — Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa. The HSGIC can be regarded as the political principals whose functions consist of determining policies; determining priorities or strategic issues; approving programmes of action; and reviewing reports on progress related to implementation and taking appropriate steps to address problems and delays. The HSGIC intends to meet once every four months and will report on its work to the summit of heads of state and government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

Reporting to the HSGIC will be a Steering Committee of at least ten members, drawn primarily from the Cabinets and senior ranks of the governments of the five initiating countries. The Steering Committee can be regarded as the management group having responsibility for the implementation of programmes of action through a small co-ordinating secretariat located in Pretoria. The Steering Committee will also have at its disposal the technical expertise of such international/regional institutions as the UNECA and the African Development Bank. Indeed, the HSGIC has already allocated assignments to these latter two bodies.

Towards NEPAD's successful implementation: confronting the challenges

The NEPAD represents perhaps the most significant initiative ever advocated for moving the African continent from crisis to renewal in the past forty years. Given that it is based on a set of internationally accepted core principles that are recognized as prerequisites for sustainable growth and development, it has a great potential for success if implemented by the majority of African states. Indeed, there is much riding on the NEPAD. In many ways it represents one last opportunity to get the global economy to take Africa seriously, and this it has begun to do, as evidenced by the Genoa Plan for Africa, which mandated the development of a G-8 Action Plan for the continent, for example — an Action Plan that is based on a thorough buy-in to the NEPAD. Consequently, the NEPAD holds considerable promise for economic, political, and social development in Africa. However, the consequences of failure will be costly, and will undoubtedly return the continent to its marginalized status and prove the African pessimists right.

The management of the implementation process therefore takes on great significance. It is full of challenges that must be robustly confronted. The first of these, as was so eloquently addressed by Horst Köhler (Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund), is the need for African leaders 'to beware of bureaucracy and institutional infighting — because in the end, this [the NEPAD] has to pay off for the people, not for organizations, [politicians], and institutions'.²² This is probably the most important implementation challenge, precisely because too many African initiatives in the past have failed as a result of bureaucratic subterfuge and the unchecked egos of political leaders. There exists an extensive body of literature demonstrating that where regional and co-operative policy reform measures have failed in Africa they were the result of a bureaucratic and political leadership that was more concerned with acquiring or maintaining its own personal power and prestige than with wider regional interests. In other words, and particularly with respect to the political leaders, they were averse to engaging in activities that could diminish their real or perceived regional or international standing to the benefit of the leader of another state. The translation here is that there was a tendency for African leaders 'to look after their own short-term interests to the detriment of any overarching continental vision'.²³

Consequently, and despite the fact that the NEPAD outlines a concrete organizational structure to facilitate implementation, there needs to be vigilance in the monitoring and the exposure of actions or behaviour that signal infighting at the bureaucratic or political levels, which can only be detrimental to the successful implementation of the NEPAD. A suggestion here is that such monitoring and exposure should be undertaken by the partners and stakeholders, including international organizations, donor countries, and civil society groups — and be carried out in a timely fashion to try to effect corrective action, rather than in *ex post* studies and analyses to record the lessons of failure which, by definition, would be too late. Indeed, a number of prominent Africans have recommended that civil society organizations should form an 'African citizens' movement' to put pressure on all new African institutions, including those implementing the NEPAD, so that they will be at 'the service of the peoples of Africa'.²⁴

The second implementation challenge of the NEPAD, and one which ought to be more pleasant than the first, is working out how to deal with the demands from the participating countries, given the decision of the HSGIC to subsume under the NEPAD process all other initiatives promoted by individual countries. The rationale for this decision is to have

22. Köhler, 'A global partnership', p. 2.

23. Comment by Moustapha Kasse as quoted in Ernest Harsch, 'New African initiative stirs cautious hope', *Africa Recovery* 15 (October 2001), pp. 21–5.

24. Harsch, 'New African initiative', p. 24.

Africa speak with one voice and collectively and effectively co-operate with its development partners. However, in doing so, and given that the needs of the continent are vast, there will be more demands placed on the NEPAD, as its implementation gains momentum, than can be satisfied.²⁵

Consequently, it will be of some importance to the Steering Committee to ensure that they are not duplicating what other regional or international organizations have been previously mandated to do nor pursuing country actions that are of low priority in the regional context and may be considered a squandering of resources. The latter eventuality is incongruous with the principles and the spirit of the NEPAD. It is therefore recommended that, in pursuing programme actions in the priority areas delineated in the NEPAD framework document, serious consideration be given to determining what project-executing comparative advantages there may be across existing regional and national organizations. Given the small size and potentially limited capability of the NEPAD Secretariat staff, it would seem to be a much more useful idea if the Steering Committee were to play more of a central co-ordinating function in the delivery of the outputs envisaged from the NEPAD.

The next implementation challenge pertains to the issue of capacity-building. In the NEPAD framework document, the need for capacity-building is stressed over and over again within the proposed strategy for achieving sustainable development. There is a considerable need to build capacity to derive and sustain the benefits of the NEPAD. Moreover, since much of the delivery implementation will be driven through country institutional frameworks, which are at various levels of development and capacity, the executing agencies will need to find suitable institutional arrangements to effect programme actions.

Undoubtedly, capacity is weak in Africa. As a result, the building of capacity is one of the areas earmarked by the NEPAD for a special partnership with donors. Africa's capacity is weak at both the human resource and institutional levels. At the human resource level, there is an insufficient quantity and quality of the mix of skills required to sustain development initiatives. The AIDS epidemic, along with the push and pull factors contributing to skill migration, has resulted in significant shortages in technical expertise in Africa. The weakness at the institutional level is directly related to the constraints at the human resource level. Both the development and the performance of institutions are functions of human resource capacity, given an environment where institutional development is regarded as beneficial.

25. Ravi Kanbur, 'The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD): An initial commentary' at www.people.cornell.edu/pages/sk145, p. 13.

Of course, in some of the recent literature, the concept of capacity has been expanded beyond human resource and institutional development to include organizational and information development. Organizational development is seen as the adaptation of the organizational structure to the more efficient rules and/or rationalization of functions and responsibilities, while informatics development is regarded as the judicious introduction of information and communication technology.²⁶ Nonetheless, however conceptualized or defined, Africa lacks the relevant capacity to sustain the processes of growth and development. Markets, for example, have been dysfunctional, due to the weak public sector institutions that manage the rules and regulations governing market-oriented economies. Capacity-building is therefore of major importance to Africa and to the success of the NEPAD.

The final implementation challenge, at least from the perspective of this article, is the requirement to utilize, and capitalize on, the processes that are now in place to reduce poverty, and for which there has already been tremendous investment at the country and regional levels. In particular, the programme of actions to be implemented must be firmly focused on the NEPAD long-term objective to eradicate poverty in Africa and to place African countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development. In this regard, one of the specific actions advocated is that the NEPAD Secretariat work closely with the World Bank, the IMF, the African Development Bank (AfDB), UN agencies, and national governments to accelerate implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) process, from which extensive lessons have already been gained.

The PRSP process is therefore recognized in the NEPAD framework document as the principal vehicle for building continent-wide priorities into national poverty reduction programmes and co-ordinating international support. Indeed, the World Bank and the IMF have expressed the view that the 'PRSPs — with their emphasis on country ownership, broad participation, and dealing with the economic and social fundamentals — should continue to be the guiding framework for our partnership with African countries'.²⁷ Consequently, the implementation of the NEPAD must be geared towards realizing the full potential of the PRSPs. The PRSP process was introduced in 1999 after the World Bank Group and the IMF determined that nationally-owned participatory poverty reduction strategies should provide the basis for all their concessional lending, and for debt relief under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. It incorporates and builds on the ideas previously developed around the World

26. S. Schiavo-Campo and P. S. A. Sundaram, *To Serve and to Preserve: Improving public administration in a competitive world* (Asian Development Bank, Manila, 2001), p. 14.

27. Köhler, 'A global partnership', p. 2.

Bank's country-level Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) and is also being used to help African countries to put in place the necessary conditions for a dynamic private sector, sound institutions, a predictable legal and economic environment, and a level playing field.²⁸

There are six principles underlying the PRSP process and they complement the five core principles of the NEPAD previously discussed as the preconditions for the renewal of Africa. The six principles are:

- being country-driven — involving broad-based participation by civil society and the private sector in all operational steps;
- being results-oriented — focused on outcomes that will benefit the poor;
- being comprehensive — recognizing the multi-dimensional nature of poverty;
- being prioritized — so that implementation is feasible, in both fiscal and institutional terms;
- being partnership-oriented — involving the co-ordinated participation of development partners (bilateral, multilateral, and non-governmental); and
- being based on a long-term perspective for poverty reduction.

The lessons learned from the development and implementation of the PRSP process in African countries should be regarded as also yielding enormous benefit to the realization of the poverty reduction outcomes in the NEPAD framework document. In fact, the PRSP process represents an excellent model of the type of productive partnership the NEPAD is seeking to achieve. Among other things, it has resulted in the mainstreaming of poverty reduction, in particular its integration with macro policy and the budget.²⁹

Conclusion

The NEPAD presents a home-grown initiative for development based on a set of core principles that have been embraced by national, regional, and international public opinion as being pre-conditions for the renewal of the African continent. Potentially, it constitutes the most important advance in African development policy during the past four decades. Undoubtedly, it is an ambitious programme and represents perhaps one last hope for Africa to reverse its slide into irrelevance. A new generation of leaders has seen the light and has agreed that sufficient will exists to find African solutions

28. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

29. David Booth, *PRSP Processes in Eight African Countries: Initial impacts and potential for institutionalization*. Discussion Paper No. 2001/121 (United Nations University/World Institute for Development Economics Research, Helsinki, 2001), p. 12.

to Africa's problems by setting specific parameters for commitments to good governance; entrenchment of peace, security, and democracy; sound economic management; productive partnerships; and national ownership.

These new leaders share the goal of ending the patrimonialism, corruption, and instability that have epitomized postcolonial Africa. For the most part, they are pragmatists favouring free markets and private sector-led growth. Under the previous generation of leaders, the continent grew poorer with every passing decade. This current crop of new leaders aspires to reverse this decline, end Africa's marginalization, and consolidate new political systems of responsive and accountable government that respect human rights and the rule of law, and which would be near impossible to rescind by future leaders who may not be so similarly enlightened.³⁰ Such good leadership must be rewarded and their sensible economic policies backed by the donor community and international organizations.

The expected outcomes of the implementation of the NEPAD are: (i) economic growth and development and increased employment; (ii) reduction in poverty and inequality; (iii) diversification of productive activities, enhanced international competitiveness, and increased exports; and (iv) increased African integration. However, the challenge now facing these new African leaders is to ensure a successful implementation by confronting the potential pitfalls and avoiding the mistakes as outlined in this article.

30. Connell and Smyth, 'Africa's new bloc', p. 89.