

NEPAD:
A new Partnership between Rider and Horse?

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2 Abbreviations

| | | |
|-------|---|--|
| ADB | - | African Development Bank |
| AIDS | - | Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome |
| AU | - | African Union |
| ECA | - | Economic Commission for Africa |
| FDI | - | Foreign Direct Investment |
| G 77 | - | Group of 77 (developing countries) |
| G 8 | - | Group of 8 (most industrialised countries) |
| GDP | - | Gross Domestic Product |
| GNP | - | Gross National Product |
| HIV | - | Human Immunodeficiency Virus |
| ICFTU | - | International Confederation of Free Trade Unions |
| IDGs | - | International Development Goals |
| IMF | - | International Monetary Fund |
| MAP | - | Millennium African Plan |
| NAI | - | New African Initiative |
| NAM | - | Non - Align Movement |
| NEPAD | - | New Partnership for Africa's Development |
| NGOs | - | Non - Governmental Organisations |
| OAU | - | Organisation for African Unity |
| ODA | - | Overseas Development Aid |
| SADC | - | Southern African Development Community |
| SAPs | - | Structural Adjustment Programmes |
| TNCs | - | Transnational Companies |
| USA | - | United States of America |
| WTO | - | World Trade Organisations |
| OATUU | - | Organisation for African Trade Union Unity |

3 Introduction

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) has been debated in many African countries over the past few months. It has drawn attention not only from governments, but also from trade unions, NGOs and business organisations on the continent abroad. In Namibia, however, the debate has been very limited thus far although a recent booklet on NEPAD by Joseph Diescho paved the way for more discussions. This booklet will complement Diescho's publication (Understanding the New Partnership for Africa's Development, 2002) by highlighting the key issues in the NEPAD document. By examining the strengths and weaknesses of NEPAD we hope to answer the most important question, namely whether NEPAD will solve Africa's problems or just exacerbate the current situation. NEPAD covers many issues, which can unfortunately not be fully covered in this booklet. However we hope to contribute to a lively debate on NEPAD as a recovery programme for Africa.

This booklet will first discuss NEPAD in the context of Africa's history and the continued marginalisation of the African continent in the era of globalisation. We will explore the question whether NEPAD can provide a solution to the socio-economic and political challenges that our continent faces today. It will be illustrative to reflect on the war on terror which has now taken over the international political agenda, and which will definitely divert attention of the most industrialised countries from Africa and development as a whole. NEPAD, as Mbeki, a lead proponent of NEPAD, puts it is another chance for Africa to reclaim the 21st century. NEPAD's dream is to reverse the scenario in which the African is a beggar and instead turn her/him into a master of her/ his own destiny. It is important to analyse the challenges facing Africa before we put our hopes in the NEPAD process to deliver development.

The booklet will present the goals, principles, strategies and the institutional framework of NEPAD. A critique of NEPAD will be presented in section 6. This critique will first focus on the unclear relationship between NEPAD and the AU. Secondly, NEPAD's unquestioning embrace of neo-liberalism and capitalism will be analysed. Questions about the legitimacy of NEPAD, which stem from the lack of continental consultation prior to the design of the plan, have become a focal issue in civil society circles. The booklet will then critically look at NEPAD's proposed financial resource mobilisation strategy.

NEPAD has endorsed good governance and a peer review mechanism. The feasibility of this will be reviewed in light of the recent pre and post election developments in neighbouring Zimbabwe. Other issues that this booklet looks at are NEPAD's apparent failure to devote adequate attention to HIV/AIDS and the programme's failure to show how women will be enabled to become true equal partners in Africa's development. The critique of NEPAD will end with an interrogation of the proposed concept of partnership between Africa and the industrialised countries. In conclusion, Section 7 discusses the challenges and presents the two alternative routes for African development; namely, the neo-liberal route in which the market leads the way, or the 'put the people before profits' strategy in which the government remains responsible for the delivery of essential goods and services.

4 The historical context of NEPAD

Africa has paid a high price in slavery and colonialism and continues to be a loser in the process of globalisation today. Hence a total of 34 out of the 49 countries in the world classified as least developed are found in Africa. In addition, the continent carries a heavy external debt which has turned many countries into helpless victims of the structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) that were designed and imposed on Africa by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. The NEPAD document acknowledges that:

'In Africa, 340 million people, or half the population, live on less than US\$ 1 per day. The mortality rate of children under 5 years of age is 140 per 1000, and life expectancy at birth is only 54 years. Only 58% of the population have access to safe water. The rate of illiteracy for people over 15 is 41%. There are only 18 mainline telephones per 1000 people in Africa, compared with 146 for the world as a whole and 567 for high-income countries' (NEPAD, 2001, paragraph 4).

These hard facts made African leaders to start thinking about how the situation could be reversed. NEPAD is not the first initiative by African leaders and builds on previous initiatives like the Lagos Plan of Action (1980), the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment for Socio-Economic Transformation (1989), the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development (1990) and others. The key question now is: Is NEPAD the right programme to reverse Africa's crisis or is there possibly a different and better route?

Amongst the many factors that contributed to Africa's development crises, four are outstanding:

1. The slave trade and extraction of natural resources by Europeans which culminated in the colonisation of the continent. The colonial occupation resulted in race and class divisions, as Europeans became the ruling class served by Africans who became second class citizens in their motherland. Although Africa's colonial occupation ended between the late 1950s and the early 1990s, the process of neo-colonialism (economic domination by other means) continued and was reinforced by the process of globalisation.
2. The 'Cold War' which divided the world into two contending ideological politico-economic systems, namely capitalism (championed by United States of America) and socialism/ communism (championed by the Soviet Union). Countries were expected to show their allegiance to one camp or the other and this division of the world fuelled many foreign funded wars and conflicts on the African continent.
3. The continued material, financial and intellectual dependency of Africa on her former colonisers can also be attributed to the development problems of the continent. The Bretton Woods institutions (IMF / World Bank) and foreign aid are instruments through which the West continues to dictate - often to the detriment of the African people - policy and governance in Africa.
4. Poor leadership by most African leaders who are preoccupied with their positions of power and self-enrichment. As Joseph Diescho put it: 'Almost all African leaders, be they civilian or military, ran Africa into the ground as they believed that their names were synonymous with the names of the countries they liberated' (2002: 8). Only a few of the liberation leaders (such as Julius Mwalimu Nyerere of Tanzania and Nelson Mandela of South Africa, Sir Ketumile Masire of Botswana) relinquished power voluntarily. Most

African leaders such as the late Kamuzu Banda of Malawi, Idi Amin Dada of Uganda, Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya and Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe could and can not imagine their countries without them being at the political helm.

With independence (1960s), Africans were expecting to enjoy their rights to employment, education, health, housing, and a clean environment. In the early days of independence, several governments followed a development strategy in which the state played a decisive role in providing basic services and in guiding economic development. This approach changed from the mid-1970s onwards when economic liberalisation was introduced in many African countries largely as part of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs). The African State, to whom Africans, through the ballot, had entrusted the responsibility of providing the most critical goods and services, was reduced to a referee state, and thus abdicated its responsibility to the forces of the market.

The 'war on terror'

It is important to note that NEPAD was drafted at a critical juncture in modern history. After 11 September 2001, when the USA was attacked on its own soil for the first time, allegedly by Osama Bin Laden and his Al Qaeda network, the global agenda was shifted towards fighting terrorism. This has implications for global political priorities and the global allocation of resources. At the last G8 meeting in Kananaskis, Canada, for example, Russia was promised US\$ 20 billion as assistance to dismantle weapons of mass destruction and to prevent extremist groups from obtaining raw materials to build nuclear bombs. At the same meeting, Africa received compliments for the NEPAD proposal but only US\$ 7 billion in debt relief and aid instead of US\$ 55 billion that African leaders had hoped for (Namibian 2 July 2002).

There is an assumption that poorer countries, which are predominantly in Africa, are likely to harbour terrorists and their collaborators. The industrialised countries might therefore be more interested in supporting 'good governance' and security-related activities in NEPAD rather than poverty eradication. African countries' support for and collaboration with the 'war on terror' coalition is likely to be among the criteria for allocating development aid and other support. As US President George W. Bush put it: 'you are either with us or against us'.

The 'African Renaissance'

NEPAD was born at a time when the debate about the 'African Renaissance' (African Rebirth) was taking centre stage. Thabo Mbeki, the South African President started talking about the African Renaissance in 1994 when he was still Deputy President. It was definitely the most opportune time to start this debate as the last colony on the African soil, namely South Africa, was decolonised. The new challenge was to achieve the economic emancipation of the continent and its people. Considering the failure and lack of implementation of most of the earlier African development initiatives, a small group of leaders took it upon themselves to champion a programme for the continent's recovery. For Mbeki, the G8 meeting in Kananaskis, Canada, where some African leaders presented NEPAD to the richest countries for review, marked the end of what started in Berlin in 1885, namely the division of Africa amongst the colonisers. Symbolically, Kananaskis may be significant in that unlike in Berlin, both parties, the former colonial masters and their

former colonial subjects, were sitting as 'partners' around the same table. However, the fact remains that the former colonisers still retain an upper hand in the envisaged partnership and the Kananaskis meeting can certainly not be regarded as an end to imperialism.

It is not accidental that Presidents Mbeki of South Africa, Obasanjo of Nigeria, and the Algerian President, Bouteflika played a leading role in the drafting of NEPAD. During the preparation of NEPAD and its predecessor proposals, the three leaders occupied strategic positions, which placed them in a position to present and spearhead a different agenda for the development of Africa. Thabo Mbeki was both the chair of the Non-Align Movement (NAM) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). President Olusegun Obasanjo hosted the G77 Summit around that time while Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria was the chair of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).

In 1999 the three leaders were tasked by the Extra-ordinary OAU Summit in Sirtre, Libya, to engage Africa's creditors on the total cancellation of the external African debt. A year later, in April 2000, the three Presidents were tasked by the South Summit in Havana, Cuba, to convey the concerns of the South to the July 2000 G8 Summit in Okinawa, Japan (Dieshco, 2002: 4 – 5). The OAU summit in Togo in July 2000 also mandated the three Presidents to prepare a comprehensive proposal on Africa's Recovery Programme that would serve as a working document for the OAU Summit of Heads of State and Government scheduled to take place in Lusaka, Zambia, in July 2001. The efforts of these three African leaders resulted in the Millenium African Recovery Programme (MAP) which Thabo Mbeki presented to World Economic Forum Meeting in Davos, Switzerland as a 'declaration of a firm commitment by African leaders to take ownership and responsibility for the sustainable economic development of the continent.'

NEPAD is in fact a merger of the Millenium Africa Recovery Plan (MAP) proposed by Mbeki of South Africa, President Obasanjo of Nigeria, and Bouteflika of Algeria and the Omega Plan proposed by President Wade of Senegal. At the 37th OAU Summit held in July 2001 in Lusaka, MAP and the Omega plan were merged and the resulting African development programme became known as the New African Initiative (NAI). In July 2002, NAI was presented to the G8 in Genoa and was endorsed. On 23rd October 2001, NAI's policy framework was agreed to by the Heads of State Implementation Committee at Abuja and the name was changed to the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). The change of name from NAI to NEPAD meant more than just a renaming of the document. The process entailed a substantial compromise on some of the more radical proposals that might not be welcome by potential western sponsors of NEPAD.

In search of African development: earlier attempts

NEPAD is neither unique nor the first initiative of its kind and was preceded by:

- ◆ Lagos Plan of Action for the Economic Development of Africa, (1980 – 2000) the Final Act of Lagos (FAL) 1980.
- ◆ African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment for socio-economic Transformation (AAF-SAP) 1989.
- ◆ Africa's Priority Programmes for Economic Recovery (APPER) 1986 - 1990,
- ◆ UN Programme of Action for Africa's Economic Recovery and Development (UN-

PAAERD) - 1986 - 1990.

- ◆ African Charter for Popular Participation for Development (1990).
- ◆ United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa (UN-NADAF) in the 1990s (1991).

In addition, African leaders, through the OAU, agreed to respect and protect collective and individual rights through the adoption of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, on 23 October 1986. It is therefore not correct to posit NEPAD as the first continental attempt to address economic and political problems in Africa, as Mbeki wants us to believe. Viewing NEPAD in the light of the earlier African development initiatives, two important interrelated questions come to the fore, namely: -

1. Why did most of these earlier initiatives not succeed in making a significant dent on the African problem of under-development?
2. What hope is there that NEPAD will now make a difference?

We should be cautious about NEPAD's claims. Mbeki's pronouncements to the effect that NEPAD is the "cure" for the problems of the continent might alienate him from the "old guard" of African leaders who have been around during the formulation and implementation of the earlier programmes. Although the "old guard" is part of the reason why the earlier programmes failed, the lack of implementation cannot wholly be blamed on the lack of political commitment and mismanagement on the part of the African leaders. The industrialised nations, as well as the IMF and World Bank which they control, also did not demonstrate any real interest in enabling the implementation of these programmes. They were opposed to any alternatives to the structural adjustment programmes they had imposed on Africa since the 1980s.

5 What is NEPAD?

When asked this question by the media, Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo described NEPAD as: 'Africa's youngest wife and as you know people talk about the youngest wife more than they talk about all the other wives in the house'. Sexist as it may sound, there is a degree of truth in the statement. As mentioned before, NEPAD is the late comer in an array of policy and programme proposals on how the continent could be freed from the yoke of poverty and under-development. NEPAD does not make adequate mention of these earlier attempts, nor does NEPAD present a comprehensive review of these earlier attempts or an explanation of why they did not succeed in developing the continent.

The first paragraph in the NEPAD document describes NEPAD as follows:

'This New Partnership for Africa's Development [NAPED] is a pledge by African leaders, based on a common vision and 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. The Programme is anchored on the determination of Africans to extricate themselves and the continent from the malaise of underdevelopment and exclusion in a globalising world' (NEPAD, 2001, paragraph 1).

NEPAD's overall aim can be summed up as '*a commitment by African leaders to place the continent on an accelerated path of social, technological and economic development*' (AFDC, 2002: 36).

Furthermore, NEPAD has been portrayed by its supporters as:

- A holistic, comprehensive integrated strategic framework for the socio-economic development of Africa. It includes a vision for Africa, a statement of the problems facing the continent and a programme of action to resolve these problems in order to reach the vision.
- A plan that has been conceived and developed by African leaders.
- A commitment that African leaders are making to African people and to the international community, to place Africa on a path of sustainable growth.
- A commitment African leaders are making to accelerate the integration of the African continent into the global economy.
- A framework for a new partnership between Africa and the rest of the world.

Principles and objectives of NEPAD

- Ensuring African ownership, responsibility and leadership.
- Making Africa attractive to both domestic and foreign investors.
- Unleashing the vast economic potential of the continent.
- Achieving and sustaining an average gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate of over 7% per annum for the next 15 years.
- Ensuring that the continent achieves the agreed International Development Goals (IDGs).
- Increasing investment in human resources development.
- Promoting the role of women in all activities.

- Promoting sub-regional and continental economic integration.
- Developing a new partnership with industrialised countries and multilateral organisations on the basis of mutual commitments, obligations, interest, contributions and benefits.
- Ensuring that there is a capacity to accelerate the implementation of major regional development co-operation agreements and projects already approved or in the pipeline.
- Strengthening Africa's capacity to mobilise additional external resources for its development. (NEPAD, 2001).

Specific goals of NEPAD

- To promote accelerated growth and sustainable development.
- To eradicate widespread and severe poverty.
- To halt the marginalisation of Africa in the globalisation process.

The NEPAD document proposes three initiatives to create conditions for sustainable development. These initiatives are: -

1. The Peace, Security and Political Governance Initiative
2. The Economic and Corporate Governance Initiative
3. Sub-regional and regional approaches to development

In addition, NEPAD identifies sectoral priorities, namely:

- Bridging the infrastructure gap
- Developing human resources
- Promoting agriculture, the environment, culture, science and technology.

Regarding the mobilisation of resources, NEPAD proposes firstly the 'capital flows initiative' which includes increasing domestic resource mobilisation, debt relief, reforms of overseas development assistance (ODA) and increasing private capital flows. The second initiative is the 'market access initiative' which includes diversification of production, improving key economic sectors, promoting the private sector and African exports and the removal of non-tariff barriers.

Expected outcomes of NEPAD

- Economic growth and development and increased employment
- Reduction in poverty and inequity
- Diversification of productive activities, enhanced international competitiveness and increased exports
- Increased African integration

The (governance) structure and administration of NEPAD

NEPAD is composed of a three-tier governance and implementation structure, namely:

1. the Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee;
2. the Steering Committee; and
3. the Secretariat.

The **Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee**, which is currently chaired by President Obasanjo, with Presidents Wade and Bouteflika as vice-chairs is the highest decision-making body. This structure consists of 15 states divided into 3 states per

OAU region including the 5 initiating states (i.e. South Africa, Nigeria, Algeria, Senegal and Egypt).

Currently the 15 states are:

North Africa: Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia

West Africa: Nigeria, Senegal and Mali

Central Africa: Cameroon, Gabon and Sao Tome & Principe

East Africa: Ethiopia, Mauritius and Rwanda, and

Southern Africa: South Africa, Botswana and Mozambique

The Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee will meet three times a year and will report annually to the African Union (AU) Summit. Its mandate is to set policies, priorities and the Programme of Action. The Chair of the AU and Secretary General are ex-officio members of the Implementation Committee, and the AU Secretariat participates in the Steering Committee meetings.

The second structure is the **Steering Committee**, which is composed of two personal representatives of each of the five initiating Presidents, and one representative for each of the 10 non-initiating members of the Implementation Committee. The mandate of the Steering Committee is to oversee the work of the Secretariat and to develop terms of reference for identified programmes and projects. This structure is also mandated to develop a strategic marketing and communications' plan of NEPAD at the national, sub-regional, continental and international levels.

The third structure is **the Secretariat**, which consist of a small core full-time staff based in South Africa. The primary function of the Secretariat is liaison / co-ordination and administration of the work of NEPAD. NEPAD has also established a number of Task Teams and Sub-Committees.

Task Teams are mandated to develop specific detailed implementable projects and programmes in the priority areas identified. The five Task Teams are:

- Capacity building for peace and security - OAU as the lead agency
- Economic and corporate governance - ECA as the lead agency
- Infrastructure - ADB as the lead agency
- Central bank and financial standards
- Agriculture and market access - OAU as lead agency

The **sub-Committees** on the other hand are mandated to co-ordinate certain thematic initiatives. The five Sub - Committees are; -

- Peace, Security, Democracy and Political Governance - co-ordinated by South Africa
- Economic and Corporate Governance / Banking and Financial Standards / Capital Flows - co-ordinated by Nigeria
- Market Access and Agriculture - co-ordinated by Egypt
- Human resources development - co-ordinated by Algeria
- Infrastructure - co-ordinated by Senegal

6 A critique of NEPAD

Some "good things" about NEPAD

The idea of proposing a comprehensive development programme for Africa is a noble move. Some of the positive aspects of NEPAD are:

- The NEPAD project does not only focus on the solutions that will be provided by African leaders and governments but also invites the African populace to be part of the process. NEPAD also admits that political solutions alone, which are often remote from the preferred solutions of ordinary people, will not solve the continent's problems;
- NEPAD values the role of the non-governmental organisations (NGOs), as partners in sustainable development;
- NEPAD recognises that Africa needs to negotiate a new relationship with her development partners;
- NEPAD recognises that the African continent has been 'plundered for centuries' and must now 'take its rightful place in the world';
- NEPAD, through the proposed adherence to 'good governance' tries to lay a basis on which many of the human rights abuses, mostly by African leaders, can be brought to the lime light (though not to book);
- NEPAD should also be seen as a wake-up call to men and women in Africa to develop themselves as well as the continent;
- Through NEPAD, a new debate is emerging of moving away from just blaming all the problems the continent is facing on colonialism and 'the whites' but rather to now realise our collective responsibility in re-building the continent and its people.

NEPAD and the AU: Who is who?

Although NEPAD emerged as a proposal of a few African Heads of State, it was approved by the OAU and then endorsed by its successor organisation, the African Union (AU). However, its status is not clear and NEPAD is rightly referred to in several documents as the initiative / project of the OAU or "the implementation mechanism of the AU". This suggests that NEPAD and its implementing structures are in a somewhat subsidiary relationship to the AU. On the other hand, some other documents propose greater co-operation between the AU and NEPAD Secretariats, which can be interpreted as suggesting an equal relationship between these two entities. This ambiguity is also reflected in the fact that NEPAD, which in its design seems to be a club (to which membership must be earned) is located in the AU, which is an inclusive association (membership derives existentially from the OAU) (Ohiorhenuan, 2002: 15). It is not clear if membership to the AU means automatic participation in NEPAD.

The fundamental principles guiding the AU as an organisation and those guiding NEPAD as a project (under the AU) are not necessarily complementary. A positive development in the creation of the AU is that unlike its predecessor, the OAU, member countries can now reasonably interfere in each other's internal affairs. The question however remains on who will make the decision on when to interfere or not to interfere. Stronger and influential

countries such as South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt and Kenya are likely to dictate to others as to when interference is warranted. The smaller economies such as Lesotho, Malawi, The Gambia, Zambia, etc, are likely to be insignificant players in such a decision. The military intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) which threatened to split SADC into those for and those opposed to intervention is an example of how problematic such decisions can be. NEPAD on the other hand is based on the commitment and fulfilment of certain prescribed conditions and the peer review mechanism, all which may necessitate countries to interfere in each other's internal affairs. Diescho raised the question: 'Which of the two has the power and authority to sanction the other? The trouble is that NEPAD is the tail, and the AU the dog. Thus the tail will wag the dog and not the other way around' (2002: 55). Another programmatic problem of NEPAD relates to the whole question of assignment and co-ordination. It is not clear who will do what and who will supervise who in the execution of the numerous tasks proposed under NEPAD. The AU, for example envisages a Peace and Security Council, responsible for monitoring and intervening in conflicts while NEPAD has a sub-committee on peace, security, democracy and political governance. It remains unclear how these organs will be co-ordinated without duplication and overlap.

Africa's powerful western donors prefer that membership to NEPAD be earned and thus, the perceived 'bad guys' (such as Mugabe, Ghadaffi, and Muluzi etc.) could be excluded. There is no question that the African elite club would prefer automatic membership to NEPAD, a position that would render NEPAD and the proposed peer review mechanism meaningless. The danger, as President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda once said of the OAU, is that the AU could become 'a trade union of dictators' with no real power of enforcing compliance with set rules and procedures (Ngugi, 2002).

NEPAD embraces Neo-liberalism

NEPAD accepts the neo-liberal theory which argues that the role of the state should be minimised to give way to private capital and the market as the engine of economic development. The neo-liberal rationale is that wealth will be created through an enabling environment for the private sector to make profits and that some of this wealth will ultimately trickle down to all citizens. Experiences in Africa and elsewhere over the past 20 years have shown that this rarely happens. Instead, economic liberalisation lead to an unprecedented concentration of wealth in the hands of a few while the majority of the world's people became poorer. The adoption, without questioning, of the neo-liberal ideas as contained in the NEPAD document is not only an ignorance of historic lessons but also an exacerbation of the African development crises. The underlying assumption is that private capital will spur development on the continent. This offers little hope for turning around the current crisis because foreign investment in Africa is largely concentrated where resources (such as oil and diamonds) can be exploited without contributing to development in those countries. Angola, for example, received most foreign direct investment (FDI) in Southern Africa but this has certainly not contributed to the well being of most of Angola's population (Jauch, 2002). Likewise, the exploitation of Nigeria's oil reserves has had very few benefits for the local population. In Latin America, trade and investment increased dramatically between 1990 and 1997 but this was accompanied by increasing poverty and economic disparity (Hormeku & Barr, 2002: 64).

NEPAD's economic strategy is fundamentally flawed as it is largely based on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank policies that have been implemented by African countries for the past two decades with disastrous effects. One of the main obstacles to Africa's economic development is that Africa has essentially remained an exporter of raw materials (whose prices on international market have declined steadily) whilst the continent continues importing finished products. These unequal terms of trade are hardly mentioned in NEPAD which also fails to provide a critique of structural adjustment programmes in Africa. NEPAD is built on the wrong assumption that countries, and in particular poor countries, just need more finance, and that the market will efficiently and equitably divide the wealth and resources in a sustainable manner.

NEPAD argues that Africa's resources have not been "fully" exploited and thus proposes a further integration of the African economy in to the skewed global economy. NEPAD wrongly assumes that "poverty" and "backwardness" in Africa and the rest of the developing countries are necessarily a result of "exclusion" and "marginalisation" from globalisation. Thus, the direct causes of poverty and underdevelopment such as slavery, colonialism, the African debt, unequal terms of trade, neo-colonialism are simply ignored. There is emerging evidence that globalisation is a process that produces massive inequalities and poverty rather than that it reduces such marginalisation. Argentina's continuing economic crises can largely be blamed on the fluidity of the global financial market. Similar crises have happened and will continue to happen in other Asian, South American and African countries.

Renowned economic development scholars such as Andre Gunder Frank, Samir Amin and others are instead arguing for a lesser integration of the African economy in the global economic system as it has become evident that under the current trade arrangement, the richer countries are getting richer whilst the poor are getting poorer. Samir Amin in fact proposed the "delinking" of the African economy from the global economic regime. Amin further concluded that, 'the concept of marginalisation is a false one, which hides the real question, which is not to which degree the various regions are integrated, but in which way they are integrated' (2002: 20).

In plain language, NEPAD calls for more capitalism, more profit-driven policies, more competition, and more privatisation. These are some of the very policies which contributed to Africa's under-development during the eras of slavery, colonialism, apartheid and neo-colonialism. Putting profit before meeting people's basic needs has resulted in African countries turning their soils into cash crop gardens for export, whilst our children suffer from malnutrition and starvation. NEPAD sadly does not offer any insight into or solution to this fundamental crisis.

Lack of popular participation

Although NEPAD is supposed to be a development agenda for Africans by Africans, it is ironic that the general African populace does not know the content and intentions of NEPAD. Again, African leaders and in particular those who are spearheading the NEPAD process - Mbeki, Obasanjo, Bouteflika and Wade - took the approach of "we know what our people want and we can do it for them." This approach raises serious questions about the ownership of the process and content of NEPAD as well as the development success that

NEPAD is expected to deliver. This problem is further compounded by the fact that NEPAD is more externally oriented (concerned with the interests of donors and investors) and pays little attention to the long-standing demands of progressive African civil society organisations who are challenging the impact of aid, debt, FDI and globalisation on Africa. Some activists question the legitimacy of NEPAD on the basis of lack of consultations in the NEPAD process and the external orientation of the plan (Mbikusita-Lewanika, 2002).

The lack of consultation in the process that led to the NEPAD process is the document's second major flaw after the neo-liberal framework within which NEPAD is located. A small group of African leaders spearheaded the policy, presenting it to their peers and to the industrialised countries for funding before Africans themselves could participate in any debate. NEPAD did not emerge out of a continent - wide dialogue and therefore remains unknown, if not alien, to most Africans (Cida, 2002: 27). Although NEPAD claims to be about a partnership for African development it lacks, from its conception, the necessary consultation and dialogue with the African civil society. Ironically, the first time many people heard about NEPAD's predecessor document, the Millennium African Recovery Plan (MAP) was in Davos at the World Economic Forum in January 2001 when President Thabo Mbeki was presenting the plan to the likes of George Soros (representing owners of international capital). Mbeki also marketed NEPAD at the G 8 Summit in Genoa where he was told to include good governance in his plan.

NEPAD and resource mobilisation

NEPAD argues that the estimated \$ 64 billion needed annually to fulfil its aspirations will be mainly obtained from sources outside the continent (i.e. donor partners and FDI's). However, when one examines the records of capital flows to the continent this expectation has no basis. Overseas Development Aid (ODA) has been diminishing since the 1990s. From an average of about 0.34% of their combined GNP in 1993, aid to poor countries fell to about 0.24% in 1998 (Ohiorhenuan, 2002: 16). Sub-Saharan Africa's net receipts of Overseas Development Aid (ODA) dropped from about \$17.5 billion in 1993 to \$ 14 billion in 1998. As a net percentage of its GNP, ODA to sub-Saharan Africa fell from 5.7% in 1993 to 4.1% in 1998. Two reasons can be advanced to explain this, namely; - the end of the cold war which reduced the need for industrialised countries to "buy" support. Secondly, the logic of globalisation and neo-liberalism that assume that the market is an efficient distributor of wealth was taking root and thus the slogan of "trade not aid" was gradually implemented.

NEPAD argues that African development can be spurred by more aid and credit, both of which have been granted to Africa for almost the past 40 years but with no significant impact on poverty eradication. A particular problem with aid is that it comes with strings attached. Borrowing countries are often obligated to purchase input from corporations that are based in the countries that are granting the loans. In other cases, certain conditions such as the liberalisation of markets and other conditionalities are attached even though the donor countries are sometimes the worst violators of the very prescriptions they attach to aid.

The argument to make here is that the implementation of any development plan for Africa should rely first and foremost on African resources and not on external capital flows.

External sources of finance should therefore be treated as supplementary. If Africans themselves are not going to be the primary givers for the development of the continent who else should? Also, Nigeria alone makes earnings of about US\$1,5 billion per day (Tandon, personal communication, 18 October 2002) and if such resources would be used to the benefit of Africa's people, there would be no reason to depend on outside financial assistance.

Debt reduction is the third dimension of NEPAD's external resource mobilisation. With a total debt service running at 5% of GDP and 14% of exports in 1999 the burden of debt servicing is a real constraint on development in Africa and the rest of the developing countries. NEPAD intends to secure an agreement on debt relief but ignores the global Jubilee movement which has campaigned for the complete cancellation of Africa's debt. Africa has repaid its debt many times over but remains indebted due to interest payments. Debt repayments from developing countries to banks in the North drain about US 160 billion each year - this is more than double the development aid that these countries receive! Debt repayments have become a major mechanism of transferring wealth from the South to the North. The former French President Francois Mitterand admitted this when he said in 1994:

'Despite the considerable sums spent on bilateral and multilateral aid, the flow of capital from Africa to the industrialised countries is greater than the flow of capital from the industrial countries to the developing countries' (quoted in Jauch 1999).

Substituting the call for debt cancellation with debt relieve, NEPAD effectively undermines the very Jubilee campaign that was meant to free Africa from the debt burden and free resources for development purposes.

Peer review and the Zimbabwe crises: A test for NEPAD

NEPAD is proposing a peer review mechanism through which African leaders will monitor each other's performance with regard to good governance obligations set out in NEPAD. At the Conference on the African Renaissance in September 1998, President Mbeki said:

'...we assume a stance of opposition to dictatorship, whatever form it may assume. Thus we say that we must ensure that when elections are held, these must be truly democratic, resulting in governments which the people would accept as being genuinely representative of the will of the people' (Taylor, 2002: 70).

This commitment had to undergo a serious test during the crises in Zimbabwe, especially during the highly disputed presidential elections of 2002 which ensured President Robert Mugabe another five-year term in office. The African elite club chose to ignore questions of governance, corruption, violence and allegations of vote rigging and was quick to declare the elections as free and fair. Open violence and intimidation, expulsion of foreign journalists, change of electoral rules on the eve of elections, verbal attacks and interference in the work of the judiciary, attacks on the independent media all which accompanied the elections were ignored by African governments. South Africa, which is the lead proponent of NEPAD was one of the first to declare the elections as free and fair whilst SADC parliamentarians and other election monitors said the exact opposite. The challenge about NEPAD and the concept of peer review is who has the moral high ground of saying what against whom?

The sad reality is that most of the current African leaders do not have the moral high ground that would allow them to throw stones at each other or anyone else. Most sit in a glass house of their own. In Southern Africa, for example, President Levy Mwanawasa of Zambia came to power through seriously flawed elections while Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania is responsible for the death of many innocent lives after he ordered a crack-down on activists of the opposition in Zanzibar. President Sam Nujoma of Namibia changed the country's constitution to allow himself to rule the country for a third term after the expiry of his two constitutional terms and the Malawian President Bakili Muluzi is currently campaigning hard to imitate this example.

Even the credibility of the very NEPAD authors is questionable. Whilst HIV / AIDS is one single pandemic posing a catastrophic threat to millions of Africans, President Mbeki questioned the very existence HIV / AIDS as well as the relationship between the virus and AIDS. Mbeki is also reluctant to spend funds on AIDS drugs thus contributing to preventable deaths. Likewise, President Obasanjo's record is dubious. A few months ago, he sent trade union leaders to prison for calling a national strike. The option for most African leaders therefore is to defend each other which will make the peer review mechanism meaningless. It also seems that the 'good governance' agenda, that was included in NEPAD because of the insistence of the G-8 and not because it was a desire of African leaders, will have little success in changing the governance status quo on the continent.

NEPAD and HIV/AIDS

The authors of NEPAD seem to think of a development process in Africa without making HIV/ AIDS one of the key issues. Whilst this pandemic has become the number one killer in Africa, NEPAD seems to gloss over the issue and does not present it as one of its priority areas. HIV/AIDS is responsible for an annual 0,5% - 1,2% GDP loss in the hardest hit countries on the African continent. It is estimated that by 2020, heavily infected countries may lose up to 20% of their GDP to AIDS (Akukwe, 2002: 1). The drastic reduction in life expectancy on the continent from 62 to 47 years is largely attributed to AIDS. This affects the most productive sector of the population on a continent where 4 out of 10 people live on less than US\$ 1 per day. An estimated 28% of mineworkers in South Africa are infected with HIV and the virus is a direct cause of about 50 % of bed occupancies in Southern African hospitals.

In Botswana, one of the hardest hit countries, one quarter of households can expect to lose a breadwinner over the next 10 years. The per capita household income of the poorest quarter of the population is expected to fall by 13%. The illness and death of breadwinners results in other crises in the family. The limited resources are spent on AIDS treatment, children are pulled out of school and poverty increases.

It is perhaps true that HIV/ AIDS does not feature prominently in the NEPAD document because of Thabo Mbeki's personal stance on the issue. Questioning the relationship between HIV and AIDS, the South African President is still reluctant to spend public funds on AIDS treatment and anti-retroviral drugs which could prolong the lives of HIV sufferers and limit the further spread of the disease.

NEPAD and gender

'NEPAD lacks the concept of gender equity and equality, it has the usual "add women and stir" characteristic' (Randriamaro, 2002: 22 –23). NEPAD like most macro-policy initiatives seem to have taken the "feminisation of poverty" approach. This approach basically mixes poverty with gender issues so that all forms of disadvantage, including the subordination of women, which ought to be addressed as a gender issue distinct from poverty, are identified as poverty issues. NEPAD wants to implement the Poverty Reduction Strategies of the Bretton Woods institutions which resemble the dreadful SAPs which have exacerbated the burden of women as mothers and carers. Further liberalisation of African economies will again hit women the hardest as it will increase the household subsistence burden, which already rests on women's labour and meagre incomes. The majority of women are found in the vulnerable sectors such as textile and clothing, leather, and food. These are the sectors which, if faced with competition and unfavourable world markets, tend to decrease wages, benefits and job security.

In the agricultural sector, market liberalisation encourages people to grow cash crops and to abandon their subsistence economic activities. Liberalisation leads to the state abdicating its responsibility in areas such as health and education, provision of affordable water, electricity and transport, etceteras. Women and the girl child soon assume the responsibility of taking care of the young, and the sick, including HIV/AIDS patients and orphans. 'It is the girl child who are first taken out of school to assist at home because the family cannot afford to pay for education' (AIDC, 2002: 5 – 8).

NEPAD is in favour of the micro-credit approach to alleviating poverty. Experience has shown that women do not easily access credit and when they do, it is not always the case that they enjoy the fruits of such credit. As was found in India, they often end up servicing the loan whilst their male partners take decisions (often selfish decisions) about what the loan or profit derived from the loan should be spent for. Credit may therefore not be the most appropriate tool for poverty eradication among the very poor , the majority of whom are women .

NEPAD fails to call a spade a spade

The NEPAD document is written in such a way that it avoids offending industrialised countries for what they have done in the past and continue to do today. 'Neutral' terms like "globalising world", "exclusion", "globalisation" are used in the document while terms such as "imperialism", "neo-colonialism" and "capitalism", which point to the causes of Africa's under-development, are avoided.

NEPAD argues that Africa's impoverishment is, amongst others, a result of "colonial legacies" and that other causes such as the cold war and the international economic system may have contributed. NEPAD fails to clearly state that slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism, and neo-liberalism are the root problems of Africa's impoverishment and loss of self-reliance. Colonialism destroyed social structures in Africa and the resultant settler-colonialism deliberately drove Africans from their land to turn them into migrant labourers. The legacies can still be seen in the skewed land distribution in countries such as Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa where the land issue remains unresolved.

As a result of its weak analysis of the causes of African problems, NEPAD merely proposes that Africans should “extricate” themselves out of poverty and strive for self-reliance. No responsibility whatsoever is placed on the shoulders of the former colonial powers to compensate for their colonial crimes. Therefore, NEPAD does not make debt cancellation and reparation demands from the former colonisers of the African people.

The document is also soft and vague in its analysis of self-serving African elite who have plundered their countries by enriching themselves through corruption and kept themselves in power through military coups. These elites actively facilitated the continuous exploitation of the continent after independence and have no legitimacy in claiming to be part of Africa's solution. They are part of the problem and it is questionable that they can now champion the solution to the African development crisis.

A partnership between rider and horse

‘When African leaders pretend to march towards the continent’s future alongside their ex-colonial overlords, they continue to ensure that Africa remains a junior partner in the race, and with no dignified future for itself’ (Joseph Diescho, 2002: 11 – 13).

‘The relationship between Western Europe and Africa has been one between coloniser and colonised, exploiter and exploited. While the exact terms of this predatory relationship have evolved over time, it seems foolhardy for Mbeki and company to ask for partnership with people who still benefit from Africa’s wealth at the expense of the African people. Imperialism is the problem; a partnership with it cannot be a solution’ (Ngwane, 2002: 52 - 53).

NEPAD does not question the power relation between Africa and the developed countries who dictate domestic policy in Africa. The question of debt has allowed the international financial institutions to dictate policies such as Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in return for loans. These programmes rolled back some of Africa's post-independence gains as the IMF and World Bank institutions dictated that African countries cut budgets; increase users fees for state services; privatise state enterprises (including municipal services); abolish price controls, subsidies and any other 'distortions' of market forces; remove currency controls; devalue the currency; impose higher interest rates; deregulate local finance; remove import barriers such as trade tariffs and quotas; lower the social wage and cut spending on education and skills - training programmes; and promote the export of raw materials to increasingly-glutted world markets (Bond, 2002: 88 - 89).

Instead of questioning these failed policies, NEPAD merely calls for their continuation with some adjustments, and appeals for assistance to the very powers that played an active part in Africa's under-development. A partnership can only be based on equality and until the current economic and political power relations are transformed, Africa cannot hope for a true partnership with the industrialised countries and international financial institutions. NEPAD fails to recognise this basic precondition for any meaningful partnership.

7 Challenges and Conclusions

True African unity is a prerequisite to any partnership initiative. If African countries, divided by colonial borders, do not think and act beyond the confines of those borders, any partnership among Africans or between Africa and the industrialised world is doomed to fail. The same vigour with which the continent united against a common enemy - colonialism - should inspire Africans to unite and challenge neo-colonialism, globalisation and the hegemonic behaviour of some industrialised countries.

What then is new about NEPAD which should raise our hopes for a continental renaissance? The players (African leaders) are the same, the game (neo-liberalism) is the same, the rules (profit maximisation for the TNCs) have not changed, and the referee is the same (World Bank / IMF, WTO & G8). There is definitely very little, if anything, that Africa should hope to get out of such a game. It is the rules of the global economic game that need to be changed. However, NEPAD fails to address these fundamental issues as African leaders have surrendered to neo-liberalism and eternal dependency. In fact, NEPAD is a demonstration of how African leaders have internalised IMF/ World bank policies and now sell them as 'home-grown' African programmes. NEPAD fails to point out that Africa's huge resources - if used differently - could lay the foundation for self-sustaining development.

NEPAD is misleading by suggesting that Africans will enter into a partnership with the West and the rest of the industrialised world and that all partners are equal and thus can equally shape the destiny of the partnership. In reality, based on its neo-liberal ideological approach and the begging bowl in the hands of Mbeki and his partners, NEPAD is a search for better co-operation rather than a true partnership. A partnership is a relationship in which all parties are almost equal and can use their powers to sanction or freely exit from the partnership. Africa cannot hope to receive US\$ 64 billion annually from the donor countries and argue that she can exercise the same powers as the donating partners.

Africa should learn to learn from history. Africa in all her history has never had a true partnership with the West and Europe in which she equally benefited as they did. Africans were the slaves and their 'partners' the masters. Africans were the colonial subjects and their 'partners' the colonisers. Africa is the supplier of cheap raw material and her 'partners' turn them into expensive finished products. Africa is the borrower and her 'partners' the lender. Some of the policy prescriptions such as structural adjustment which are perpetuated through other neo-liberal ideals has caused the worst socio-economic disasters on the African continent.

Africa should first partner with herself and the rest of the developing nations who know and share the burden of poverty and underdevelopment. Local resource mobilisation and the demand for the reform of institutions such as the WTO may produce a development process in which Africa can pride herself instead of the one in which she will remain a beggar.

A fundamental concern about NEPAD analysed above is its neo-liberal inclination which can basically be explained by the rampant transnationalisation of the capitalist class as well as the unquestioning acceptance of the 'there is no alternative (TINA)' approach to

globalisation. The capitalist class has become truly transnational. This, amongst others, is composed of TNCs executives and affiliates, globalising state bureaucrats, capitalist inspired-politicians and professionals, and consumerist elites. Aware of their common interests and values, these people link up across the borders and use the leverage of international bodies such as the WTO, IMF/ World Bank, etc to advance their capital accumulation cause. The transnational elites have entrenched their capitalist interests through the purchase of foreign equity shares, mergers with corporations from other countries, winning and enabling sub-contract arrangements for global corporations, etc (Taylor, 2002). NEPAD in its current form is a major victory for the 'there-is-no- alternative (TINA)'-to-globalisation brigade and a total betrayal by the African leaders of the millions of their peoples who are submerged into poverty (Graham, 2002). Our fight against neo-liberalism and capitalist interests should therefore not only focus on corporations in the North but also on the partners and affiliates of these institutions resident on the continent. Nor should we fool ourselves by accepting that these people will be worthy partners in bringing to an end a system which benefits them so much. History is on the side of those who argue that the economic model and its related implementation strategies in NEPAD will not realise the economic liberation of Africa.

Africans should harness Africa's resources firstly, before they are put on the international basket for exploitation by those who have already milked the continent. Practically, this could take the form of conditionalities for any company that wants to exploit Africa's resources. Such 'performance requirements' must include the creation of quality jobs, local processing of raw materials, protection of the environment, transfer and diffusion of technology to the local economy, etc. Provided that such criteria are implemented and monitored, Africa might at last be able to derive some benefits for its people from its natural resources instead of leaving them to be plundered by foreign TNCs with the assistance of corrupt local elites.

National policy-making, research and evaluation of programmes and agendas should tap more into local human resources. Governments should refrain from rushing to solve the unemployment problem in the industrialised countries by calling expatriates, who often do not fully understand our circumstances, to come and do what an average African scholar can do. This is a challenge for the continent to start valuing its human assets. The 'brain drain' could be addressed by cultivating a true human rights culture and democracy in which the expression of opinion is not personalised to the extent that those expressing a divergent view are called names and victimised. Thus, the culture of "think and act alike" which seems to have become a religious practice with some regimes should be discouraged.

There are basically two ways in which the noble goals and ideals contained in the NEPAD document can be achieved. Firstly, through the 'NEPAD way' - which means opening up the provision of basic services like water to local and international investors who will bring in capital and then charge to recover costs and make profits. The government will be expected to ensure that the investment climate is right, - ensuring that investors can invest and expatriate their profits just as they wish while industrial action and other 'disruptions' are minimised. This approach holds the danger that the poor, who cannot afford to pay the price for services, will simply be denied essential services.

Another development approach which Yash Tandon called 'the people's way' would be based on the premise that the provision of water, electricity, adequate housing, basic education, health and essential transport are basic human rights, and are thus not determined by the people's ability to pay for such essential services. Government has a responsibility to provide such basic services to its entire nation instead of subjecting them to the profit motive (Tandon, 2002: 62).

NEPAD further fails to address macro-policy issues and structural problems which are the root causes of women's marginalisation and narrowly focus on women-specific projects with the hope that they will automatically reverse women's marginalisation. Whilst discounting women's unpaid and uncounted work in production and reproduction, women are perceived as passive, in need of income generating measures, education, training, and access to credit (Randriamaro, 2002). NEPAD therefore fails to tackle the broader and more fundamental issues to women's marginalisation such as discriminating laws and structures, cultural norms, male-biased development priorities, land reform, public expenditures. NEPAD can only address women's development concerns by firstly focussing on gender sensitive policies and legislation at the macro level. The institutions tasked with the implementation and monitoring of such policies should also be gender sensitive.

As far as labour is concerned, NEPAD is meaningless unless it includes core labour standards into the administration of NEPAD, and establishes a formal structure (within NEPAD) to address trade, development and core labour standards, with the full participation of the ICFTU-AFRO and OATUU. Social, labour, gender, environment and development concerns should not be seen as side-products of development processes but as core issues of any sustainable development strategy.

Another Africa is possible if we follow a development strategy that puts meeting people's basic needs above the concerns of business to make profits at all costs. The satisfaction of people's basic needs and human rights is a necessary condition for the attainment of genuine democracy. In order to achieve this, Africa's destiny must be in the hands of Africans themselves - workers, farmers, trade unions, women, students, the youth, etc. Why should Africans entrust their future to elites whose allegiance to donors and international financial institutions is greater than to the people who put them in power? As Bob Marley said: 'Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery, none but ourselves can free our minds'. The time has come for Africans to shape their own destiny and to engage NEPAD and its authors with the aim of setting out a development strategy that will not benefit the African elites and their allies in the North, but the majority of the African people. NEPAD therefore may need to be transformed into AFRIPAD – African Partnership for Africa's development (Chikezie, 2002), only then can we talk of a true partnership for the continent's development.

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