

**DRAFT PAPER:**

## **Ensuring a pro-poor focus in agriculture and rural development through NEPAD**

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**This is a draft paper which has been made available by the author to the Southern African Regional Poverty Network (SARPN) for distribution, particularly in Southern Africa.  
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## Summary

This paper evaluates the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) strategic focus on issues of agriculture and rural development. The essay takes the form of a critical commentary on the NEPAD Framework. Some of the main points from the paper are:

- NEPAD's launch takes place in a climate of afro-pessimism, and hence given its boldness, it has a great deal to prove. One of the litmus test of NEPAD's success will be the degree to which it improves governance, peace and stability in Africa. The participation of the G-8 is conditional on seeing improvements in the area of governance.
- NEPAD is to be seen as a vehicle for co-ordinating on a regional basis the determination of priorities and the flow of development resources that are aligned to these priorities. It views Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) as one of the primary means to achieve poverty reduction targets. NEPAD's role as regards PRSPs is to ensure that they are consistent with NEPAD's overall objectives.
- NEPAD recognises the central role of agriculture. However, its tilt towards increasing productivity through enhancement of infrastructure and inputs; export led growth through opening regional and international markets; and improving backward and forward linkages through agro-processing leaves the impression that there are still weaknesses in its conception of the overall picture of agriculture. The bias towards a certain model of agriculture-commercial and export orientated-points to gaps in its conception of a more wider and deeper perspective on rural development.
- The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) is the central set-piece or text that defines in more detail NEPAD's vision on agriculture. However, CAADP's solution for drylands farming is far too reliant on the promise of building irrigation schemes. There is not enough on community-based initiatives, or developing long-term strategies for improved natural resource management.
- The key gaps in the CAADP and the overall NEPAD framework are:
  1. The lack of a strong perspective on the role of sustainable livelihoods in poverty alleviation.
  2. Understanding the linkages between urban and rural sectors, especially since NEPAD specifically espouses a non-rural bias.
  3. The impacts of HIV/AIDs which is not factored in any of the NEPAD text.
- In the way forward: Couple issues arise as possible areas where further thinking and work needs to be done:
  1. Revisiting the question of NEPAD's proposed model for agricultural development.
  2. Further developing NEPAD's sustainable livelihood perspective.
  3. Introducing a more holistic view on natural resource management.
  4. Ensuring that NEPAD's implementation strategy incorporates a more diverse partnership arrangement than is evident at the moment.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This paper evaluates the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) strategic focus on issues of agriculture and rural development. The essay takes the form of a critical commentary on the NEPAD Framework. Its thesis is pivoted around the following key issues:

- The location of NEPAD within the larger politics of the AU and G-8
- The status of NEPAD in terms of the G-8 African Action Plan, and the Action Plan for Environment.
- An interpretation of NEPAD's framework for agriculture and rural development.
- A critical commentary on this framework in the light of Africa's agricultural and rural development context especially from the window of sustainable livelihoods.
- A commentary on livelihoods opportunities within the NEPAD strategy, including an evaluation of the role of Poverty Reduction Strategies and Papers (PRSPs).
- Conclusion: How do we or do we not work with NEPAD?

The essay while seeking to 'unpack' NEPAD's conception of agriculture, also hopes to provide pointers for future work. The essay is meant to be a synthesis of existing material, and to provide a synopsis at a strategic level. The essay is meant to facilitate discussion and the development of further areas of research and action. The author has merely used NEPAD to extract pointers, and the document does not pretend or to position itself as providing an answer or detail of how Africa's agricultural challenges can be met.

## **2. THE POLITICAL SETTING**

NEPAD has generated both positive views, as well as a raft of gloomy scenarios from its sceptics. It has led to the revival of a discussion about African identity perhaps building on where W.E.B du Bois, Franz Fanon, kwa Nkrumah and others have left off. Africans are refashioning the way in which they think about themselves, and seek to rectify how others have chosen to represent them. NEPAD is a pan-African project, although it is not explicitly worded as pan-Africanist. NEPAD is girding itself to take on anew the mantle of Pan-Africanism. Perhaps, others, who show less courtesy to such pan-Africanist pretensions are likely to think of it as a pan-Africanism with neo-liberal garb.

The positioning of NEPAD as a political vehicle for change cannot be envisaged without understanding the politics of globalisation. This larger setting is the canvass, upon which the future map of NEPAD has been drawn. Its vision is crafted to enjoin the nexus between developed worlds and Africa's development needs. NEPAD is best understood as an unfolding political process. The political process and the set of engagements NEPAD elicits are far more important to study than the current sketch of its content. The substance is more likely to follow the political actions that will inform its entire edifice.

Partnerships are in essence the pillar upon which NEPAD has been founded. It is a partnership within Africa, and with those outside of the continent, especially Europe and North America. It is for this reason that it has a different texture and nuance to all other pan-Africanist projects of the past as it does not see the project of Africa's

transformation as a solely an African project, although it is to be driven by Africans. It has sought in a shrewd way to re-contextualise the pan-Africanist agenda within the context of globalisation and the post-cold war geo-political landscape that is the de facto system of relations today. A system of relations that encumbers the entire future outlook of NEPAD. NEPAD states:

**“A critical dimension of Africans taking responsibility for the continent’s destiny is the need to negotiate a new relationship with their development partners. ...The new relationship should set out mutually agreed performance targets and standards for both donors and recipient”.**

Symbolic manifestation of the new partnership is evident through NEPAD’s chief representatives having secured a special seat at the G-8 meetings. The interest of the G-8 in Africa may be entirely motivated by issues of security. In the recent Evian meeting, the G-8 approved support to establish a multi-national force to bolster peace-keeping efforts in war-torn regions of Africa. Insecurity in Africa, is feared, could spill-over into Europe. The U.S.’s hyper-interest in Africa is not entirely an enigma if one considers the security challenge that the U.S faces today.

Some have even remarked that the Bush administration is more Africa friendly than any previous US administration largely as result of September 11.<sup>1</sup> The Bush administration plans to increase foreign assistance by 50%. About \$15 billion has been earmarked to support the fight against AIDS, and \$5 billion will come on stream by 2005 from \$1.3 billion in 2003.<sup>2</sup> An independent federal corporation will be established to administer what is being called the Millenium Challenge Account (MCA), through which these earmarked funds will flow.(Zagorin, 2003)

Security and war will threaten to endanger the longevity of the attention span of the G-8. However, NEPAD’s reliance, and the stamina of its leadership can be sustained if NEPAD takes an approach that is both internally and externally resilient.

The lack of such an approach is one of the weaknesses of NEPAD at the moment. There are some who argue that there is a need for a multi-pronged approach so as to undo the growing perception that NEPAD is only about attracting foreign development assistance. That in acquiring a reputation for being a funnel for aid, its strategy on mobilising resources through other means would not be given impetus and is more likely to be over-shadowed by the scramble to secure aid money. Historically, Africa has been aid dependent, with the inflow of aid outstripping that of private contributions. Compounding this finding is the general appraisal that aid inflows have been a failure in Africa ( Kanbur, 2000). There is a great task ahead of NEPAD in ensuring that its creation is not motivated entirely by using NEPAD as a way of sponging on foreign aid.

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<sup>1</sup> However, the reasons for this are to be found in America’s growing interest in African oil. Africa already supplies 15% of U.S oil, which is said to double in the next couple of years. Within the Bush administration, new securo-crats have argued vigorously that the Bush administration should not lose sight of Africa’s geo-political importance to the U.S. An element of this strategy includes nurturing non-OPEC States, so as to break the back of the OPEC cartel if need be, and reduce dependency on Middle Eastern oil in the future. The opening up of terms of engagement with Africa was first initiated under the Clinton era when the Africa Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA) was introduced. AGOA comes to an end in 2008 and was designed to promote US trade links with Africa States that adhered to a set of good governance principles as specified by the Act.

<sup>2</sup> These funds will be separate from the funds being administered by USAID which has come under considerable malignment from the far right in the US for the failure of US foreign aid assistance.

In locking itself in a partnership with the G-8, NEPAD hopes to remove the last vestiges of Afro-pessimism that has straddled both its colonial and post-colonial history. In so doing it hopes to steer the G-8 thinking through active dialogue and engagement. The relationship with the G-8 is not without contention. It has been construed by those more critical of the G-8 as being exclusive, and increasing the potential for manipulation and co-option by more powerful forces within the G-8. The wisdom of a strategic partnership, and dialogue with the G-8 will always be embroiled in a politics of strategy versus tactics. However, while the G-8 and its relationship has garnered almost exclusive coverage in the media, NEPAD's political positioning is not to be entirely dependent on its success by a relationship with the G-8 alone.<sup>3</sup>

African governments also succeeded in ensuring that NEPAD and Africa's agenda, garnered special attention during the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD), held in South Africa in September 2002. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI)-an agreement endorsed by Heads of State at the WSSD- now contains a special section on Africa. This was viewed as a political coup by many within the UN multi-lateral system.

The limelight of NEPAD has been such that it has at one point almost threatened to supersede the status and authority of the African Union (AU), leading to tension between AU and NEPAD leadership. The tension was not about the location of NEPAD within the AU<sup>4</sup>-but rather whether Africa's development programme can be mediated through the interpretative lense of NEPAD and its cohort of leaders rather than the AU.

The tensions was no more evident than around the handling of the issue of governance and the peer review system. The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is an innovative mechanism based on the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) model. It relies on collegial elbow rubbing, and wise council as a way of nudging countries in good governance practice if they are found wanting (Cilliers, 2002).<sup>5</sup>

Critics, argued that the peer review system proposed for NEPAD was not strong enough as governance in Africa had a greater chance if African States were also subject to external pressure for reform which the NEPAD mechanism inherently contained because of its partnership with the G-8. Mbeki, mockingly, retorted that his critics wanted to undermine the AU, **'...because they are convinced that as Africans we cannot be trusted to promote democracy in Africa without the guardianship of Western countries'** (Cape Times, 16<sup>th</sup> April 2003)

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<sup>3</sup> For instance, although, this relates specifically to South Africa, interesting regional trade pacts that are being formalised on a South-South basis under South Africa's leadership.. In particular the South Africa Customs Union (an intra-trade region which was formally defined as the Rand Monetary Area, is likely to benefit from increased trade). South Africa, Brazil and India have agreed to sign a trilateral commission, which is pivoted around increase trade between the countries. The agreement with Brazil is potentially far-reaching as Latin America has very little contact with Africa. Under the Presidency of Lula, Brazil is keen to take a lead for Latin America in forging stronger contact and relations with Africa.

<sup>4</sup> Which has now been resolved with NEPAD endorsed as an AU programme

<sup>5</sup> Not all countries so far have signed up to the APRM. At present the number stands around 15 countries.

Perhaps as result of the mild rift and perceived competition between NEPAD and the AU, the AU itself has also been transformed, and as a result engaged in a speedy implementation of some of its key governance instruments. NEPAD's future is dependent, and will be judged on how governance issues are dealt with both by NEPAD and the AU. Just as much as there is jostling within the NEPAD/AU relationship, so there will be an assertion from the NEPAD leadership that governance within Africa should not be dictated from outside, but Africa should be allowed to evolve its system organically.

However, hovering above the ambition and optimism of NEPAD and AU are the dark clouds of Afro-pessimism. Afro-pessimism from the right, no doubt has its roots in a history of colonial reporting and writing about Africa. An entire network of European authors, reporters, and expeditionists have constructed an image of Africa, the remnants of which continue to linger in the European psyche.

On the left spectrum a different kind of Afro-pessimism lurks. A colony of activists have spawned an entire industry on prophesying the death of NEPAD. Some suggest most unflinchingly that NEPAD is a bourgeois programme or a 'class project'<sup>6</sup> (Adesina, undated). Others, have criticised NEPAD for not being participatory enough, and harbour the suspicion that NEPAD is a new form of 'recolonization' of Africa (Ayoob, 2002).

The prevalence of Afro-pessimism seems deeply buried in the conscious of its victims and world's powerful nations. NEPAD's political and cultural project is an attempt to dismantle this cacophony of repeated images of hopelessness accumulated over the centuries, for a more confident, and self-assured image and presence amongst others. NEPAD can serve to bring about greater accountability and stability in Africa. In so doing, it can generate a new confidence in Africa that is aimed at correcting the doomed caricatures of Africa and its people (South African Churches, 2002).

### **3. NEPAD AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION**

NEPAD is a 'comprehensive integrated development plan that addresses key social, economic, and political priorities for Africa'. NEPAD is meant to be a programme for all Africans. As NEPAD has unfolded, security, governance, and the creation of a politically free culture have been the primary focus. Governance in general, is viewed as a macro priority. Rudiments of NEPAD's vision on greater self-reliance, and the need for Africans to foster greater economic integration and cooperation have previously been etched in the Lagos Plan of Action. For this reason NEPAD is not entirely new. As some point out NEPAD is a recycling of content that has been tabled before. There is some truth to this, but the emphasis should be placed on the process and not the content.

Good governance is central to ensuring Africa's development path is sustainable in the long-term, and will that investments made today will lead to achieving developmental objectives within the appropriate target group. Governance is given priority, because there is a recognition that poverty can only be addressed when a political system is able

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<sup>6</sup> Activist such as Ashwin Desai of the Concerned Citizens Group have described it as delivering Africa to the elite, or a 'GEAR for Africa', in reference to South Africa's Growth, Economic and Reconstruction Programme, a sort of home-bred structural adjustment of South Africa's economy.

to guarantee a basic set of individual rights and freedoms that are missing in many African States today.

The NEPAD founding document notes:

**“This new African initiative is a pledge by African leaders, based on a common vision and a firm 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 main goals of NEPAD are:

- To promote accelerated growth and sustainable development
- Eradicate widespread and severe poverty
- Halt the marginalisation of Africa in the globalisation process

The goals are to be driven by five work-teams:

- Peace and Security
- Economic and corporate governance
- Infrastructure
- Agriculture and market access
- Financial and banking standards

NEPAD’s character and form also takes on the structure of a region-wide poverty reduction strategy. The structure of NEPAD can also be understood through its three primary thrusts for all its variety of sub-actions. These are: Conditions for Sustainable Development, Sectoral Priorities, and Mobilising Resources. NEPAD hopes to catalyse development in Africa by seeking to achieve a sustained and ambitious growth rate of 7% per annum over the next 15 years. Its own goals are consistent with the target and time frames as set out in the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs).<sup>7</sup>

NEPAD seeks to address development issues in a comprehensive manner and draws its inspiration from the Monterrey Consensus<sup>8</sup>, in associating Africa’s underdevelopment to a combined historical legacy of persistent debt, unfavourable trade, lack of investment and dependence on overseas development assistance (ODA). The Monterrey Consensus laid down the template for a comprehensive and integrated approach to development which NEPAD seeks to affirm through its own actions. NEPAD seeks to turn Africa’s development process on its head by ensuring that Africa is an active participant, rather than a passive one in the global economy.

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<sup>7</sup> At Monterrey developed countries agreed to increase ODA by 2006, to a total of US\$12 billion/year. US\$12Billion/year seems very small by comparison to the Russian US\$20Billion you mentioned earlier

<sup>8</sup> The Monterrey Consensus which was sealed in 2002 it follows the UN Secr. General convening an international Summit on Finance for Development in Monterrey Mexico. The Consensus dealt with all aspects of finance that impinges on development. This includes the full spectrum such as: trade, foreign direct investment (FDI), loans, aid and other sources.

NEPAD's vision of active engagement with the global political and economic system is aimed at enhancing opportunities for Africans so as to achieve long-term sustained growth. The vision is premised on the idea of collective action, and redirecting the flow of resources not away from Africa, but within, both from internal and external sources. Economic growth, through sounder economic and financial policies, driven by a regional supporting mechanism is seen as a way of ensuring this. One segment of resource mobilisation is trade within and outside of Africa. The inequitable nature of the international economic system is epitomised by international trade. It has always been a prickly issue when it comes to Africa's underdevelopment. International trade is one of the stumbling blocks in Africa's progress and integration into the global economy. This represents a major challenge for NEPAD. Globalisation has intensified the alienation of global markets from Africa. As Arrighi (2002) notes most poignantly:

**“The real problem is that some countries or regions have the power to make the world market work to their advantage, while others do not, and have to bear the costs”. (2002)**

To fulfil this targeted growth of 7% Africa has to be assured of sources of funds totalling approximately US\$ 64 billion annually. A report compiled by the Namibian Economic and Policy Research Unit (NEPRU), published in 2002, points out that 7% growth is unrealistic, if not impossible (Dahl and Shilimela, 2002). The study bases its conclusions on the collation of figures from data on the flow of ODA, FDI and loans to Africa following post-independence. In general, the study concludes that the target of 7% must work against the grain of a general net outflow of capital from Africa, combined with a low inflow into the continent. The trend of reverse capital flows has not shifted significantly in the last few years. In 1975, the regional GNP per capita of Southern Africa stood at 17.6% of world per capita, and estimations in 1999, show a dramatic decline to 10.5% (Arrighi, 2002).<sup>9</sup>

NEPAD's governance structure is anchored at its apex by the AU Summit of Heads of State and Government. NEPAD's implementation and policy co-ordination is given oversight through a Heads of State Implementation Committee<sup>10</sup> made up of 15 countries which meet every 4 months. Day-to-day on the ground activities are co-ordinated by a steering committee from the five founding countries, and is supported by a secretariat based in Pretoria.

As I have noted earlier NEPAD's founding document outlines a wide and diverse focus on a variety of issues that have both global, regional and national scope. In assisting to sort out this layer and plethora of priorities some thought to issues of prioritisation have been given by the development economist, Ravi Kanbur, from Cornell University. In an illuminating paper, he has suggested ways in which NEPAD could prioritise its actions and interventions. Kanbur suggests that NEPAD's comparative advantage is the regional credibility and legitimacy it enjoys. As it is fast emerging as a focal point for many

<sup>9</sup> Arrighi further notes that generally western developed countries took an internalist interpretation of Africa's plight, blaming elites and corruption. This interpretation largely emanates from the 1981 Berg Report commissioned by the World Bank. Arrighi's work is an attempt at a critical and comprehensive critique of the reasons for uneven development in Africa.

<sup>10</sup> The key functions of the Implementing Committee are as follows: Identifying strategic issues that need to be researched, planned and managed at the continental level; Setting up mechanisms for reviewing progress in the achievement of mutually agreed targets and compliance with mutually agreed standards; Reviewing progress in the implementation of past decisions and taking appropriate steps to address problems and delays.

regional issues NEPAD is able to deal more effectively with issues such as regional level governance, debt reduction and access to markets than is possible at the sub-regional or national levels (Kanbur, 2001).

Kanbur introduces a framework that seeks to build on the regional advantages of NEPAD in selecting those components or interventions within NEPAD, that are most likely to lead to a greater reduction of poverty directly or indirectly. In so doing ensuring that in managing its prioritisation NEPAD does not carry out work that is better done by institutions at the sub-regional or national levels, in cases where it clearly has no comparative advantage. Kanbur seems to favour the position that NEPAD's role should be strategic, and work towards 'unblocking' barriers that affect all African states alike at the regional political and economic level.

He further suggests, quite perceptively, that while the regional institutional setting, places NEPAD in good stead to engage global issues, it may not have a direct comparative advantage in addressing poverty in all circumstances, and so more closer scrutiny should be given to national programmes. Kanbur in talking about poverty relies on the definition of capabilities and social exclusion developed by the Nobel Laureate and Economist, Amartya Sen. Sen in his thesis proposed a more holistic definition of human capability and hence understands poverty as being a complex set of factors that act upon an individual's quality of life and experiences of opportunity within the formal and informal economies. Kanbur writes:

**“Most recently, the additional conceptualisation of poverty as vulnerability (to events outside the control of the individual or the community) and voicelessness (in the face of unresponsive local and national institutions) has also entered the discourse. But all of these focus on the individual, the household or the community. The moral weight of the concept of poverty comes from its direct link to human beings and their well-being, rather than the state of larger entities and statistical abstractions. The ultimate focus of policy in the global, regional and national domains must therefore always be its impact, directly, or indirectly, on the poor at the local level” (Kanbur, 2001).**

The NEPAD text makes reference to the importance of national plans for poverty reduction. NEPAD takes a strategic view of the role of Poverty Reduction Strategies Papers (PRSPs). It acknowledges the need for a national level vehicle to deliver on poverty reduction objectives, and hence has set its eyes on a revised role for PRSPs, i.e of seeking alignment with and serving NEPAD objectives as well. In doing so, NEPAD would seek to ensure that all the sectors it defines as priorities will be encapsulated within a PRSP. NEPAD in taking a strategic view as regards the use of PRSPs is exercising pragmatism. The proponents of PRSPs may well align themselves to NEPAD, and serve to be a useful indicator of impact and effectiveness of NEPAD's development strategy.

NEPAD's attempt to tackle all of the region's problems, may lead to it finding itself squandering its most important asset: its status as a regional body and the leverage this can secure for Africa. Kanbur concludes:

**“But, apart from simple operational overload, there is a danger that in satisfying too many demands NEPAD will squander its most precious resource - its position as a regional institution that draws its regional and global legitimacy from its democratic roots and aspirations”.**

The concerns around prioritisation and implementation load did not go unnoticed. Thabo Mbeki, following his trip from the G-8 meeting in Evian, sought to allay these fears. He noted that while development assistance for NEPAD was generous, he questioned, in a candid manner, Africa's ability to absorb such assistance. He recognised the need for an implementation organ that is different to the secretariat. The function of the organ would primarily be focused on implementation. Mbeki remarked: **“This process (NEPAD) has put a very big burden on Africa to produce results. I think we have bitten off more than we can chew.”** (Business Day, 4.6. 2003).

Another useful action plan to study as it unfolds is that of NEPAD's Environment Action Plan<sup>11</sup> which was adopted by the AU in Maputo, in July 2003. In particular its outline of actions for combating desertification are relevant as far as its linkages and alignment with community based land management initiatives within the CAADP strategy and drylands farming. The Environment Action Plan's primary emphasis is to ensure the sustainable use of land resources; and interestingly earmarks special actions for sustainable agriculture and use of rangeland. The Action plan, and the first instance of it in the NEPAD documents studied so far, attempts to make a substantive commentary on rangeland farming and its importance in Africa which receives scant attention in NEPAD and the CAADP. It is a plan that speaks more closely to the issues of natural resource management than the CAADP.

#### **4. NEPAD ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

Agriculture in Africa accounts for employing 60% of the labour force, 20% of all merchandise exported, and 17% of GDP. (Figures obtained from CAADP) About 200 million people or 28% of the population suffers chronic hunger. Over the last few years there has been a progressive growth in imports, with countries spending at least US\$18.7 billion in 2000 alone on food. NEPAD identifies agriculture as a lead sector that can stimulate economic activity and ensure long-term food security for Africa. NEPAD's position on agriculture is formulated in the context of agriculture in Africa suffering from low productivity and being subject to persistent risk and vulnerability, including climate change that has reduced its fortunes over time.

NEPAD recognises the important role that agriculture can play in rural development and around which a whole stream of development initiatives can be anchored. It also underscores the need for food security, and agriculture serving as a safety net for many rural households.

**“Improvement in agricultural performance<sup>12</sup> is a prerequisite of economic development on the continent. The resulting increase in rural people's purchasing power will also lead to higher effective demand for African industrial goods. The induced dynamics would constitute a significant source of economic growth”.**

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<sup>11</sup> The principle agency driving this process is UNEP with the support of GEF funds. At the last meeting of experts on the Environment Action plan the idea of an Africa environment fund was mooted. In November AMCEN is to convene a meeting of donors in Cairo to take this idea forward further (Source: personal communication Maxwell Gomera, IUCN-ROSA, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2003).

<sup>12</sup> The operative word often used in the NEPAD document and by its officials is 'competitiveness', despite the fact that this notion can be an illusion.

The document also recognises the importance of institutional issues, and the need for research and extension to support productivity. To complement intensive agricultural production, NEPAD envisages the expansion of agro-processing, provided market access is secured and guaranteed. The addition of agro-processing is to encourage a strategy of diversification at the high end of the market, so that Africa does not become dependent only on its raw materials, but is also able to support growth through value-added activities. The promotion of high-value goods is built on the assumption that world and regional markets are favourable to receiving these goods.

In so doing, NEPAD seeks to enhance the rural poor's ability to participate in the export market through the production of high value goods. NEPAD identifies the following enabling interventions as being necessary to stimulate agricultural led growth:

- Ensuring access to water, especially to small-holders.
- Improving land tenure and promotion of land reform.
- Enhancing agricultural credit and financing schemes.
- Reducing the bias towards investment in urban areas, and greater emphasis to rural areas.
- Seeking access through liberalisation of trade.
- Encouraging greater private sector investment in manufacturing.

Given agriculture's importance to Africa, NEPAD in its concluding section recognises the need for a special project on integrated land and water management, so as to ensure that Africa's agricultural potential is improved and sustained. It places a great deal of emphasis on expanding irrigation capacity especially in dryland areas as a way of boosting productivity.

One is hard-pressed to find in its founding document a comprehensive conception that takes into account the full breath of the agricultural challenges in Africa, much of it embedded in Africa's own political-economy. A prevailing economic reality of inequity within the agricultural sector demonstrates that there are divergent expectations and interest between subsistence, small-holders, and large farmers which need to be taken account of and not papered over. As Kydd notes:

**“..smallholder agriculture is presently the key sustainer of the majority of the world's poorest people, so the dynamics of smallholder agriculture ought to be a central question for research and debates about development” (Kydd, 2002).**

At best one would suggest that the outline of a plan for action for agriculture in the NEPAD base document is an unfinished product. It must be viewed as an expression of intent, rather than a comprehensive or holistic statement on agricultural development. Therefore, one should not have an expectation of finding an answer to all one's questions in the base document.

In summary, the collection of disparate statements on agriculture, are pivoted around three key thrusts: increasing productivity through the supply of information and inputs; increasing market access for agricultural products by engaging NEPAD's developed partners; and finally, to advance agricultural development by establishing forward and backward linkages into other segments of the economy through value added activities. Its primary emphasis is improved productivity through modernisation, and the creation of a

better enabling environment. Certainly, critics would find fault with much of what is being suggested as the agricultural framework for NEPAD. But, the benefit of the doubt, lies in the fact that it is an unfinished project, requiring considerable work. In the light of this there is room for opportunity, and insertion of new ideas if they have not been addressed as such.

## 5. THE G-8'S AFRICA ACTION PLAN AND ITS POSITION ON AGRICULTURE

One needs to turn to the G-8 Action Plan for Africa (AAP) to establish what type of partnership arrangement between NEPAD and the G-8 will evolve for agriculture. AAP is symbolically significant, as it emanates from a consultation between NEPAD and G-8 representatives. This is unprecedented for both Africa and the G-8. AAP represents an attempt to build bridges between the developed world and Africa. AAP contains the G-8 position and interpretation of NEPAD. The document also reflects a compromise between the different G-8 powers, as each one of them have different pet subjects to pursue, perhaps lingering from past and continuing activities at the bilateral level. France<sup>13</sup> for instance sought to push for a more favourable agricultural framework for Africa prior to the Iraqi war. However, at the G-8 meeting in Evian, nothing more was heard of France's overtures. The G-8 perimeters for support to Africa, via NEPAD, are encapsulated by its preambular remarks:

**“Our partners will be selected on the basis of measured results. This will lead us to focus our efforts on countries that demonstrate a political and financial commitment to good governance and the rule of law, investing in their people, and pursuing policies that spur economic growth and alleviate poverty.”**

G-8 countries in endorsing the AAP see the peer review mechanism and its working within NEPAD and the AU as a way of legitimating and selecting its partners in the framework of support it would like to pursue. It therefore seeks to leverage its influence and power to promote or enforce good governance measures in Africa. It notes:

**“The peer-review process will inform our considerations of eligibility for enhanced partnerships. We will each make our own assessments in making these partnership decisions. While we will focus particular attention on enhanced-partnership countries, we will also work with countries that do not yet meet the standards of NEPAD but which are clearly committed to and working towards its implementation. We will not work with governments which disregard the interests and dignity of their people”.**

The G-8 statements on NEPAD are designed to legitimate their own interventions as regards the direction governance issues should take in Africa. By extolling liberal democratic values, the G-8 would satisfy constituencies back home that their assistance is being provided to 'well-behaved' leaders and States in Africa.

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<sup>13</sup> The Chirac plan identified three areas for reform: restructuring of food aid so that it is cash rather than food, thus allowing purchase of food within Africa, rather than imported from developed economies. harmonisation and strengthening of the various preferential access systems that northern countries offer to sub-Saharan exports. establishment of a group of experts to investigate ways in which rampant fluctuation in commodity prices can be tamed.

AAP in avoiding being an answer to all things and everybody has identified the following areas as primary areas of focus:

- Promoting peace and security
- Strengthening institutions and governance
- Fostering trade, investment, economic growth and sustainable development
- Implementing debt relief
- Expanding knowledge: improving and promoting education and expanding digital opportunities
- Improving health and confronting HIV/AIDS
- Increasing agricultural productivity
- Improving water resource management

AAP underscores the importance of agriculture to Africa's rural development, and its importance as economic driver for many national economies in Africa. AAP also gives recognition - and here it reinforces NEPAD - for the need to seek ways in which the agricultural sector can be diversified. The AAP outline of support for agriculture can be distilled into the following key thrusts:

- Increasing international community support for agricultural research.
- Improving access to markets in Europe and the US.
- Improving sustainable production and competitiveness through the use of a variety of technologies. One of the technologies is biotechnology. There is no doubt that US interest have come to bear on the insertion of this wording into the text of AAP.
- Supporting the mainstreaming of gender issues
- Promoting property and resource rights
- Supporting and facilitating the placement of infrastructure to increase market access and productivity.
- Ensure the inclusion of agricultural policies into Poverty Reduction Strategies
- Improve food security by ensuring that the poor have sustainable livelihoods

AAP addresses to a large extent the framework for agriculture in NEPAD. AAP's programme is pivoted around: research and technology, productivity stimulation through market access and adoption of new technologies (biotechnology), and infrastructure.

AAP coddles a spectrum of different issues. Like the NEPAD document, it is broad, and lacks specifics or details on the way forward. It too has deleted from its discourse the political-economy of agriculture in Africa. There is a need for a level of nuance that paints a much more sounder picture of the agricultural situation in Africa. Both documents fail to draw us into the complexity of agriculture. They are what they are: unfinished political sentiments and one cannot expect to extract more from them.

## 6. COMPREHENSIVE AFRICAN AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (CAADP) TO THE RESCUE

Does NEPAD and AAP favour commercial agriculture versus that of subsistence or small-holder farming? Do they see agriculture as a way of driving export led growth or a way of sustaining national and local economies? How do they relate or link the importance of land and water reform to support agricultural access and productivity? How will they deal with existing inequities in agriculture? To find answers to some of the detail for what is being proposed in NEPAD and AAP one has to dig into a more detailed action plan.

In the February 2003 report of the NEPAD secretariat, reference is made as regards progress with the agricultural component of NEPAD. NEPAD has forged a partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) ADB, and the RECs in driving the implementation of the agricultural segment. African Ministers of Agriculture on the 9<sup>th</sup> of June 2002 endorsed the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). The CAADP is a strategy within a strategy.

The CAADP provides for a more enriched reading than NEPAD or AAP for its formulators have given considerable attention to a range of issues. The document is sombre, and refers to a situation of 'crisis' that needs urgent redressing. The CAADP identifies four key pillars to catalyse agricultural development and productivity in Africa. The reasons for such a narrow focus, are:

**“..its contents deliberately focuses on a few pillars of action that can rapidly enable Africa to be more productive in agriculture. The decision to focus on what makes the earliest difference to the crisis is easily justified given that Africa is the continent that is the world’s poorest, receives a quarter of global food aid shipments, spends nearly US\$19 billion annually on agricultural imports, and suffers most from man-made and natural disasters that require food and agricultural responses”.**

The CAADP four pillars are:

- Extending the area under sustainable land management and extending reliable water<sup>14</sup> control systems.
- Improving rural infrastructure and trade related capacities for market access.
- Increasing food supply and reducing hunger
- Agricultural research, technology dissemination and adoption

The CAADP is seen as the primary vehicle for driving NEPAD’s vision for agriculture. It is the plan around which regional economic agencies, partners and national authorities will convene. The CAADP is not only an arm of NEPAD, but also a way of structuring present and future regional and national interventions.

The CAADP views agricultural and rural development issues as being intertwined. Reference to infrastructure development<sup>15</sup>, are not only seen as a way of improving

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<sup>14</sup> Africa only uses about 4% of its renewable freshwater. Africa is one of the two regions in the world facing serious water-shortages. Average water availability in Africa is about 5720m<sup>3</sup>/capita/year compared to a global average of 7600 m<sup>3</sup>/capita/year.

agricultural access and intra-national and regional trade, but also supporting a diversity of rural development objectives. An additional challenge it has set itself is to feed Africa's growing population -which is growing at 3% per annum-and can only be met if there is a 4% annual growth in agricultural production over the next 30 years (Voortman et al. 2000).

The CAADP will rely on NEPAD's regional status to engage the global community by negotiating favourable agricultural trade conditions that are supportive of Africa's development objectives. This would be consistent with the Doha round of WTO talks which has declared the next rounds of trade talks to be development friendly.

**“The NEPAD process provides a golden opportunity for a common agricultural policy framework across the continent, which would address this problem. ...NEPAD can also provide the much needed policy environment for strategic action orientated approaches, while recognising the importance of continuous monitoring of the progress made and impact achieved at country-level”.**

The CAADP, because of its level of detail and clarity, in many respects displaces the hodge-podge framework of both NEPAD and AAP as regards agriculture and rural development. The document has gone into some detail and reflection on the cost of implementing the four key pillars. In terms of its first pillar, it estimates that the investment need for expanded irrigation and better land management is \$37 billion for the period 2002-2015. The implementation of the entire CAADP is estimated to cost about US\$251 billion.

While the CAADP does not pretend to be all encompassing it falls short on a few things. Two particular areas of concern, is the status of livestock farming and that of landless people. The rise in landless labour is an early indicator of pressures that the rural poor are facing with decreasing size of land, lack of access, and the weakening of the agricultural economy over the last decade or so. Special interventions and programmes need to be considered to support the needs of landless people.

## **7. CAADP AND DRY-LAND FARMING AND LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES**

Africa contains the largest spread of drylands globally. These are estimated to be roughly about 2 billion hectares, covering about 65% of Africa's total land area. One third is defined as hyper-arid deserts, while the remaining two-thirds consists of arid, semi-arid, and dry sub-humid areas. It is within the ambit of the first pillar of CAADP, that one can find reference and indications to a possible role for drylands farming in sustainable livelihood strategies. The harnessing and enhancing of water productivity is seen as a key challenge for ensuring that agricultural productivity is sustained in the future. A great deal of emphasis is placed on water management in the CAADP document. It notes:

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<sup>15</sup> The CAADP notes: “ Apart from North Africa which is reasonably endowed, Africa's rural infrastructure is generally inadequate by almost any measure: Africa's people face the longest distances to the nearest large markets; a fifth of Africa's population is landlocked-less than a third of Africans live within 100km of the sea compared to over 40% for other developing regions; rail freight in Africa is under 2% of the world total, marine freight capacity 11% and air freight less than 1%; power generation capacity per capita in Africa is less than half of that in either Asia or Latin America.”

**“Water is essential to bring forth the potential of the land and to enable improved varieties of both plants and animals to make full use of other yield-enhancing production factors”.**

By ensuring access to water, households and small and large commercial farmers will have more certainty as far as their investments in agriculture is concerned. Anecdotal work done by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) in South Africa<sup>16</sup> demonstrates that rural households have benefited significantly in terms of income expansion and diversification by engaging both farm and non-farm activities through improved access to water.

While, the CAADP’s broad emphasis is correct, its path of ensuring improved access may not be sufficient. While access to water does improve livelihoods, in many cases in the drylands it may only be improving safety nets rather than lifting people out of poverty. Drylands are often distant from markets and without good markets irrigation is often not economised. (Campbell et al. 2003).

Improved management of land, and water control are inter-linked. The CAADP basic working assumption is that by increasing moisture and nutrient retention, agricultural intensification rather than expansion can be pursued. It earmarks a two-pronged strategy to achieve this. The first relies on increasing investment in irrigation infrastructure in countries. The CAADP sets a targeted increase of irrigated land from the current 12.6 million ha to 20 million ha by 2015. The majority of the countries that the CAADP aims to cover are the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). It identifies both small and large-scale irrigation schemes as targets for new investment.

The second, is to expand the scope for community based initiatives in water and land management as a way of enhancing food security. The thinking and approach for this is inspired by the Food and Agriculture Organizations’s (FAO) Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS)<sup>17</sup> aimed at targeting subsistence or poor households. The SPFS targets households mainly in the sub-Saharan region, where food insecurity is rife. The origins of the SPFS can be traced to addressing the challenge of chronic food insecurity in the countries which it has operationalised the SPFS. The second phase of SPFSs’ will also see a greater integration into Poverty Reduction Strategies Papers (PRSPs). Given the importance attached to SPFSs within the CAADP, and its future links with PRSPs,<sup>18</sup> that this may well become one of the vehicles to explore alternative community or household level methods for dryland farming and diversification of livelihoods.

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<sup>16</sup> Personal communication, Marna da Lange.

<sup>17</sup> The SPFS was launched in 1994 to support the World Food Summit’s target of halving the number of people who suffer from hunger by 2015. The broad objective of the SPFS is to assist developing countries, in particular Low-Income-Food Deficit Countries to improve their household and national food security on an economically sound and environmentally sustainable basis. The vehicle for doing this is by supporting groups of small-farmers and poor rural communities. The SPFS operates currently in 38 Africa countries and is integrated as part of national food security strategies.

<sup>18</sup> UNCTAD last year released a report (The LDC 2002 Report) suggesting that the targeting of poverty reduction assistance through PRSPs needs to be revisited. They noted that PRSPs could simply become extensions of past adjustment programmes. Like the previous adjustment programmes PRSPs give priority to short-term stabilisation and not long-term development. The Report advocated for an improvement in the design of PRSPs, where it proposes that the central task is to double average household living standards through building productive capacities and generating livelihoods. See [www.unctad.org](http://www.unctad.org).

Perhaps this is an attempt to bridge the gap between high-level investments, and 'soft' investments so far enshrined within the CAADP.

However, one has the distinct feeling that large scale irrigation schemes are more favoured as an option in the CAADP. This has the danger of displacing investment in community based land management methods and practices or biasing the resource mobilisation efforts towards large and medium sized irrigation schemes. Irrigation schemes always attract favour from politicians as they are high-profile, visible, and almost immediate. Programmes that require intensive investment and active management of natural resources are least favoured because their results are not immediate. They are also tougher to accomplish because they rely on organizational capacity, and sound social contract at the local level. Improving local level natural resource use and management practices are often exhausting and labour intensive.

Approaches that can also instil an ethos of using different technologies and methods rather than solely rely on conventional and modern irrigation systems needs to be extolled. Africa's agro-ecology, and relatively difficult geography for water control, will by itself demand a more organic and diversified approach to be pursued. The distribution of African farmers in different agro-ecological zones demonstrates that farmers use different modes of agricultural practices. Where agro-climatic conditions are reliable they use high-yielding seeds, and where it is less reliable they revert to using seeds that have low yield, but are risk averse (Voortman et al. 2000).. There is some merit in pursuing an organic development of new methods and technological innovations which derive their inspiration from Africa's special agro-ecological context.

While the CAADP places emphasis on expanding investment in irrigation schemes the CAADP does not necessarily exclude other alternative ways of improving agricultural productivity in drylands. The document does make fleeting remarks about improved water harvesting techniques and other methods that must receive consideration. This points for a need to develop a more comprehensive and integrated approach to water management that builds on existing work that is already being done. There are also more comprehensive approaches such as catchment or water shed management, that take a broader natural resource management perspective, rather than just looking at the world from a single resource or economic sector perspective.

The CAADP must be seen as a plan for setting in place the right macro-level enabling environment. It therefore in summary sees the enabling environment dependent on achieving targets in its four pillar areas. Within these the following concerns are primary:

1. Linking productivity to investment in strategic infrastructure, with irrigation infrastructure being primarily supported by better land and water management.
2. Increasing market competitiveness and access by negotiating better internal terms and stimulating intra-regional and national agricultural markets.
3. Revising, and enhancing existing food security measures using the vehicle of the SPFS and PRSPs. The emphasis on food security is prompted as a major concern in the immediate future because of the recent food security crises in Southern Africa, and recurrent food shortages and famine in countries such as Ethiopia.
4. Improving research capacity, with an emphasis on integrated natural resource management and adoption of readily available appropriate technology.
5. Exploring a mix of resource mobilisation strategies involving national, international and private sector sources.

Within the NEPAD Environmental Action Plan, numerous issues are dealt with concerning natural resource management. Of particular importance are its considerations on desertification and climate change issues. The primary framework for the formulation of its actions on desertification and land management in general is the Convention on the Combating of Desertification (CCD), and views the regional agencies as vehicles for implementation of its plan of action. An additional interlinking concern is climate change. The Plan talks of addressing climate change through various mitigation measures, but also implores the importance of finding ways to reduce the vulnerability of the poor to change, as their livelihoods are threatened by climatic variability. With this sentiment now firmly in place, a whole raft of livelihood approaches can be accommodated and explored further.

The proposed vehicle for dealing with climate change issues is the formulation of a National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA). NAPAs, if they are to be primary vehicles for orientating and co-ordinating implementation on climate change issues have to align themselves, in areas where it is necessary- to the CAADP and other plans that are also to be springboards for livelihood initiatives, as they all seek to achieve similar goals in the long-term. At a strategic level alignment has to be sought, to ensure that programmes being initiated under different umbrellas or sectors are synergistic and do not duplicate efforts and the mobilisation of resources.

The litmus test for the CAADP is the extent to which it represents a pro-poor agricultural development framework. Agricultural development historically has been primarily founded on a model of increased food self-sufficiency through cost-reducing technologies in order to achieve lower food prices. However, this was not sufficient to eliminate poverty, particularly in counties that had generated food surpluses. (Hazell, and Haddad, 2001) Often the insertion of food security concepts is meant to project a pro-poor approach. However, the word food security is a much abused lexicon that if one were to study the details of what is meant one would find that it is often used synonymously with the old term of food self-sufficiency. Perhaps this is an unconscious slip. The CAADP seems to straddle both food sufficiency and security objectives simultaneously in its outline of implementation.

A second area that will significantly contribute towards addressing some of the poverty challenges, is the role of rangeland management and livestock production. As is evident from the CAADP document, there is a strong bias towards crop farming. Livestock farming is not only a store of wealth for many Africans, but also a source for different goods and services. Livestock provide, milk, meat, manure, animal traction, and in more entrepreneurial communities a resource for domestic or communal tanneries. Livestock herding in sub-Saharan Africa is significant in terms of the number of people it employs and its impact and challenges it poses to sustainable land management. Perhaps, this blind-spot can lead to the trivialising of the importance of the link between livestock production and crop farming, especially to resource poor farmers, who cannot buy expensive inputs. In West and North Africa, pastoralist and crop farmers, co-exist symbiotically, and reinforce each other's welfare. The status of livestock production is an enormous gap and concern that needs urgent redressing within the CAADP.

## 8. GAPS IN THE NEPAD PROCESS

The primary conceptual weakness in the current NEPAD framework, and its supplementary text, such as the various action plans, is a household livelihoods perspective<sup>19</sup>. This is especially true when we consider drylands. The vast swathe of Africa's population are not part of the mainstream cash based economy. The majority live between the nexus of cash, and non-cash based activities. There are interdependencies between cash based and non-cash based economies that are often missed by mainstream economist that have not sufficiently grappled with the complexities of these interdependencies. A broader conception is needed in order to dispose of the bias that poverty can only be defined by the lack of income (Sen, 2000) Sen notes:

**“Income may be the most prominent means for a good life without deprivation, but it is not the only influence on the lives we can lead. If our paramount interest is the lives that people can lead-the freedom they have to lead minimally decent lives-then it cannot but be a mistake to concentrate exclusively only on one or other of the means to such freedom. We must look at impoverished lives, and not just at depleted wallets”**

Inequity in power and political participation leads to ‘relational deprivations’ , i.e. **‘in the form of inability to do things that one has reason to want to do’**. The path of deprivation results from the inability of individuals or groups to appear freely in public, and take part in the life of the community (Sen, 2000). Sen's thesis is to view capability by looking at the entirety of the conditions of being that make us lead a fulfilling life as humans. This is the most evocative message of Sen. Sen introduces a new kind of political project in development: exclusion starts at the denial of rights, and without addressing this development assistance will be fiddling at the edges. Sen writes:

**“Exclusion from the process of governance and political participation is indeed an impoverishment of human lives, no matter what our per capita income may be”**

Many studies now show that the poor engage in a diversity of activities, and not all of them are agriculturally related. Agriculture is but one component of their diverse portfolio of activities. A household level perspective (with an understanding of how households make decisions within constraints and opportunities imposed by the conditions of local and national economies), allows for more integrated, and knowledgeable approaches to be taken in addressing development challenges.

Poor households in general, and particular rural households are subject to insufficient endowments and accumulation of assets. The livelihoods perspective draws us into taking a more sounder representation of how poor households survive against vulnerability and risk. It allows vulnerability to be assessed by linking the local with the national, regional and global scales of mutual influence. It provides a tool to understand both the structural factors that define poverty, as well as individual patterns of behaviour, strategies of asset accumulation, and use at the household level that also contribute to sustaining a livelihood. The household approach is a more convincing tool, for informing

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<sup>19</sup> The sustainable livelihoods literature states that a livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain and enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base(Chambers and Conway).

the character of macro-policies that have a bearing on household livelihood strategies. They are also more likely to provide pointers of which strategies or macro-policies work and which do not, and how social exclusion manifest through the different layers of the economy and political system.

In evaluating the NEPAD documents, a number of key issues emerge as areas that require more commentary on and development within the NEPAD framework. These list of issues are not comprehensive, but I do believe, are key areas where future work can be done to support what is being intended within NEPAD. No, doubt, others may enlist a trove of other concerns. But, the attempt here is not to be comprehensive, but select those most wanting of commentary and further elaboration in order of importance.

### **8.1 Importance of dry-land farming and income diversification**

Some experts are of the view that Africa's export potential is significant, as Africa has 0.25 hectares of arable land per capita compared to East Asia's 0.11 hectares, and 0.28 hectares in Latin America. About 27% of African exports are food and agricultural raw materials, however, unfavourable terms of trade are hampering agricultural reform in Africa. Developed country support to their own agriculture has been responsible for depressing the price of African agricultural products by 12% per annum.<sup>20</sup> (Perkins, 2003) In drylands, diversification of income sources may be more important than commercialisation, given the distance to markets for small farmers. Attempting to squeeze small-holder farmers into a commercial mode, may not be the optimal solution, as this is likely to add to their transaction cost on farming that is already proving to be a low return and hence affect their viability in the long-term.

The intermediate solution may well be to ensure their existing practices are sustained, until more conducive conditions prevail that allow a commercialisation leap to be made with the least of transaction cost.<sup>21</sup> However, this leap from small to large or subsistence to commercial is still a nebulous area of study in agricultural research. The conditions that allow this leap to be possible needs to be better understood within an African context. It is also evident-from a rudimentary assessment of agricultural context in Africa-that this leap to commercialisation is not feasible for all farmers, let alone be a necessary prerequisite for success.

CIFOR's studies on livelihoods in Southern Africa also demonstrate how diversification of income sources and livelihoods activities, enhances agricultural productivity, because it allows cash that is generated from other segments of the economy to be used for the purchase of inputs. This not only increases interest in agriculture, but also creates a platform for encouraging investment in resource management, and improving in particular soil fertility. Diversification as a complementary strategy should be central to the work of the CAADP. It is perhaps the 'missing link' in building the bridge between subsistence farming to viable commercial forms of activity in the long-term.

In a paper written by Jonathan Kydd and colleagues (Kydd, et. Al, 2002), they make a compelling argument for ensuring that agriculture is still a leading driver of pro-poor

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<sup>20</sup> Perkins also shows that despite the prevalence of special trade preferences the uptake of these preferences has been poor and have not improved export expansion.

<sup>21</sup> What is often underestimated is the significant amount of investment that goes into building local institutions that support a commercialisation programme for agriculture.

growth, but not the sole mechanism. Kydd et al assert, that agriculture's invidious role is rather by default, because there are no alternatives that can provide on a mass-scale a pro-poor led growth. Kydd et al note that in Sub Saharan Africa the majority of the poor, about 70% of its people, live in remote rural areas. Their remarks confirm once again the need to consider the importance of the ratio of people to natural resources as a factor in developing economically efficient agriculture in Africa.

Kydd et al suggest that sustained poverty reduction requires a combination of improved access of the poor to a balance of assets, the productive use of these assets, and reduced vulnerability to shocks. Kydd et al's paper underscores the need to see agriculture as part of a diversified portfolio of activities. He and colleagues quote figures for the contribution of non-farm activities to the income of households in different regions in Africa. In Africa in total, the estimate for non-farm contributions is 42% of the share of household income.<sup>22</sup> This figure is further corroborated by other studies, which demonstrate that on the global scale smallholders and landless workers earn more than 50% of their income from non-agricultural sources. However, diversification could also be an early indicator of impoverishment and degradation of assets and not always a positive sign. (Hazell and Haddad, 2001) They note:

**“Diversification is more likely to be associated with greater impoverishment when increasing land scarcity occurs in conjunction with slow agricultural growth, stagnant national and regional economies, and falling wages. Such situations are not uncommon in many of the poorer countries in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.”**

Kydd et al, point that there is evidence that the non-farm income base is increasing. In so doing, they suggest the evidence poses a difficult political choice: to what extent should there be greater investment in non-farm activities vs farm activities? Or what Hazell and Haddad may want to ask: is this a reflection of new opportunity or simply desperation? Kydd et al, however, provide some interesting, and rather compelling reasons for considering the expansion of non-farm activities whilst maintaining the primacy of agriculture. They may well concur with Hazell and Haddad-although their rationale is slightly different and perhaps more optimistic. Their rationale is based on the fact that farm activities are seasonal, and in non-seasonal periods, labour is made redundant unless it is deployed elsewhere for productive activity. They elaborate:

- Complementary use of labour in slack agricultural seasons
- Allocation of labour to different activities according to skill, productivity, and earning differentials,
- Better spread of income across the year to match consumption needs;
- Opportunities for different patterns of income in farm and non farm activities to cross-finance seasonal expenditure
- Diversification of risk by spreading involvement across activities,

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<sup>22</sup> A useful notion introduced by Kydd et al, is to delineate the production of goods and services along the lines of what is tradeable and non-tradeable activities. As the general economic climate increases, with improved delivery of public sector infrastructure and services, the shift to more tradeable activities is likely to be advanced. As roads are built, it is easier to sell labour and goods to others. As linkages with urban sectors grow, so will the opportunities for tradable activities increase.

However, amongst both groups of researchers, there is a acceptance that agriculture's role is foundational and can only enhance and complement the process of diversification that is already on stream in these underdeveloped economies.<sup>23</sup> Improvements in agricultural production is reinforcing as it can drive non-farm activities through increased purchases of services, increased savings from lower prices of food, and consumption of goods.

The multiplier effects for an additional dollar created in an agriculture in Asia was found to be about \$0.5 to \$1.0. (Hazell and Haddad, 2001) However, the net benefits of such multiplier effects are dependent on the structure of equality within specific countries, regions or villages.<sup>24</sup> Hazell and Haddad, insert a precautionary, pointing out that generally, non-farm activities in low potential areas have shown to be weaker than in high potential areas. Thus suggesting that the spread of non-farm activities is likely to be bound by agro-climatic factors and not uniform across the landscape of Africa.<sup>25,26</sup>

In Conclusion: An enabling environment for livelihoods and income diversification can be secured through two fronts: ensuring that macro-policies at the national level are not jeopardised by the havoc that the international climate of politics and economics can wreak on weak States. Many developing countries are vulnerable to global economic uncertainties, which they need to placate themselves against in an increasingly interdependent world. And, secondly, in seeking to protect themselves from the risks and dangers of global uncertainty, national governments, have to make a concerted effort to design policies that enable the poor to mobilise their own resources. This would include investing in local institutional building and long-term strategies in natural resource management.

### **8.3 Understanding the linkages between the urban and rural poor and its implications for agricultural development**

There are interesting linkages between the urban and rural poor. UNEP's African Environment Outlook notes that at present 38% of Africa's population-about 297 million people-live in urban areas. By 2030, this will increase to 54%, where Africa's population is projected to be about 1405 million. Africa's rate of urbanization is estimated to be about 3.5% per annum, which is the highest in the world. (UNEP, 2002)

The out-migration of the poor to urban areas is largely motivated by the perception that amenities and opportunities in the cities and towns are favourable. Anecdotal evidence points to transient residency between urban and rural locations. It is not as if when

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<sup>23</sup> However, it is important to note that particularly in low potential areas staple crops are a primary necessity so as to provide a cushion against insecurity. They are often not the bedrock of for economic stimulation especially in low income areas as they serve mainly to protect households from food shortages.

<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, it is also likely that the structure of agricultural production, in terms of investment and labour input, is likely to shift towards non-farm based activities if these are more sustainable in the long-term. Such shifts may begin to depict the slow weaning of labour away from agriculture towards manufacturing and the service sectors.

<sup>25</sup> However, this can be reversed with improved technology adoption and infrastructure investment.

<sup>26</sup> What their study also shows is that while significant productivity improvements can be made through rapid technology development which is not reliant on secure property rights, productivity improvements through better NRM will take longer because of their dependency on cooperation and longer-term security over tenure.

people move to urban areas they are set to languish in urban squalor in perpetuity. Commuting between rural and urban areas is an indispensable form of living for many of the poor in Africa. It is perhaps the least understood phenomena. If, transient residency is an embodiment of a new patterns of mobility amongst the poor, this alone merits special investigation. If for anything, we must but, revisit our fixation on insisting to hold together the neat delineation of the categories urban vs rural in our discourse thus far.

In Africa, in particular, urban-rural connections are complex, and have evolved with time as ways of diversifying livelihoods and safety nets, by connecting cash-and non-cash based economies. It need not be overemphasised here that urban agriculture is beginning to occupy an important space in urban and peri-urban areas globally. The expansion of homestead gardens in informal settlements and low-value housing is all too evident of the important role these activities play in supplementing household needs. Urban agriculture's role in increasing food security amongst the urbanised poor is gaining currency.

Evidence from eight African and three Asia countries demonstrate that 30-80% of urban families are involved in food, horticultural or livestock production. (Scherr, 1999) Our conceptual inclination to think rural, and not urban, may serve to be a detrimental when it concerns conceiving future development strategies. Urban-rural links are an essential feature of livelihood strategies amongst the poor. Perhaps, to add to this picture of complexity is how urban and rural communities in one State connect with rural or urban communities with other States.

Resource constraints in rural areas will mostly likely give rise to an urban rush amongst the rural poor. Urban ghettos will continue to be perceived as places of opportunity.<sup>27</sup> Livelihoods studies cannot just find comfort in relying on what happens in rural areas, but must persistently connect the dots that bring the interface between rural and urban areas to the fore.<sup>28</sup> An interface that will in future increasingly define the form and character of the livelihood strategies that both the urban and rural poor will pursue. This has significant policy implications for national governments, donors and others. Should governments rather be spending more money in urban areas or rural areas? How much do we really know to answer this question definitively?

#### **8.4 Impact of HIV/AIDS**

What is striking in the CAADP, is how HIV/AIDS is ignored. If anything, an agricultural strategy that does not factor the impact of AIDS, is likely to be a failure. This oversight borders on the irresponsible and is an indictment. AIDS, to use a phrase from J.M. Coetzee's latest novel, 'Youth', will exact an 'immovable verdict' over the history of Africa and its people if it is not addressed urgently.

HIV/AIDS in Africa, is also symbolic of the existence of a deficit of rights. Deficit of rights exists within different layers of society which have reached a crescendo. The different layers over time have led to an accumulated social impact of untold proportions. The deficit of rights is most pronounced when it comes to relationships

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<sup>27</sup> This partly fuelled by the persistent historical urban bias amongst economic planners, and policy makers in general.

<sup>28</sup> Lipton, in an illuminating chapter attempts to establish the urban bias predisposition as being rooted in ideology. Although at present a more nuanced approach to urban rural dynamics is in order, that is not deeply embedded in a bias or favouring of one or the other.

between men and women. Women suffer the most from the HIV/AIDS pandemic as their rights are at least protected in a predominantly male-dominated society.<sup>29</sup>

There is no need to belabour the horrifying statistics of HIV/AIDS<sup>30</sup> in Africa and in particular in Southern Africa. What is perhaps more pertinent is how its impact will manifest in Africa, and especially in further debilitating the condition of the poor. In Southern Africa alone, HIV/AIDS affects between 15-35% of adults between the ages of 15 to 40 are affected by HIV. The vast majority of whom will be chronically ill or dead within 5 to 10 years. (Mullins, 2001)

AIDS affects the population group that is the most resilient and productive in society. Those between the ages of 25-45 years of age. It a segment of the populaton which we rely on to maintain a healthy economic system and an array of institutions that keep a country intact. There can be no doubt that livelihoods would be affected adversely by AIDS<sup>31</sup>. Mullins notes, ominously:

**“It could be strongly argued that HIV/AIDS is one of the most likely shocks livelihoods in this region, affecting more people directly and consistently than more commonly discussed shocks such as drought, floods, conflict or economic collapse.” (Mullins, 2001)**

AID's most significant impact will be the displacement, distribution and organization of labour.<sup>32</sup> As labour is diverted towards care within a household, less labour is available for productive activity. Labour distribution and productive capacity will also be affected by deaths, people taking time to attend funerals, and the impacts of AIDS for different communities within certain geographical areas. Labour scarcity in many Southern African countries, as a factor in productivity, must be taken as foregone conclusion.

Areas which suffer labour shortages will have to import labour from elsewhere, increasing the transaction cost of labour recruitment, transport and management. The recruitment of new labour from groups which are of different ethnic or cultural backgrounds will test the resilience of local social capital and institutions. The neat social order of the past will be dismantled by new social pressures that AIDS is already introducing to already over-stretched and compromised local institutions.

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<sup>29</sup> Botswana on the border of South Africa is in danger of being perhaps the first modern nation to go extinct because of the pervasive prevalence of the disease.

<sup>30</sup> For a more in depth analysis of the HIV/AIDS pandemic see: Lampthey et. al Facing the HIV/AIDS Pandemic, Population Bulletin, Vol. 57, No.3, September 2002. The report attributes the high prevalence of AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa to the existence of major transportation routes across sub-Saharan Africa that has carried soldiers, truck drivers, migrant workers, sex workers, and affluent businessmen.

<sup>31</sup> The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in 2001 put out a report on AIDS on its website in an attempt to forecast the security risk for the US and countries most affected by the disease. See also the RAND Report: Brower, J and Chalk, P The Global Threat of New and Reemerging Infectious Diseases: Reconciling US National Security and Public Health Policy, RAND, 2003. The social cost of AIDS in South Africa, the Report makes an interesting remark on the matter. It notes: “In rural areas, AIDS is reducing the demographic pool from which future community leaders can be drawn and, through debilitation, helping to undermine civil participation in political affairs-both of which bear on the effectiveness of governance in what remains a nascent democratic state.”

<sup>32</sup> In 1990, the agricultural sector accounted for 68% of the workforce of sub-Saharan Africa, and 37% of the workforce for North Africa. (Africa Environment Outlook)

Most importantly, human capabilities such as life skills, social capital, and knowledge is lost or decimated over time. Its low availability has both generational inter-generational consequences as traditions and customs are ‘thinned’<sup>33</sup>. These will also impact on cultural cohesion and the long-term retention and transfer of knowledge. The special UN envoy, Stephen Lewis, in an independent article attempted to give visual import of the impacts on AIDs at the household level. Lewis in doing so sought to bring to the conscious of decision makers and politicians the dramatic and silent devastation that AIDs is having on Africa. He wrote:

**“...the household assets have been exhausted by attending to parental illness; children have been pulled out of school to care for sick and dying parents, losing, in the process, the one meal a day that might have been available to them from school feeding programme; malnutrition is everywhere evident; fields are left untended; crops aren’t grown; food isn’t taken to market; and if it is, no one has money to pay for it”.** (Sunday Independent, June1, 2003)

The loss and scarcity of labour power as result of AIDS, and in particular in Southern Africa (where the AIDS pandemic is the worst), has been described by some as the cause of a ‘new variant famine’.<sup>34</sup> (de Waal and Whiteside, undated) This hypothesis was developed in response to the fact that the prevalence of chronic poverty and food insecurity in southern Africa cannot only be explained by un favourable national economic conditions or climate. Their general prognosis is that the impact of AIDS on food security is poorly understood in terms of its emaciation of rural households. De Waal and Whiteside suggest that if unattended, not only will AIDS reduce agrarian livelihoods, but handicap progress permanently. Their paper quotes a figure of 30-35% reduction in income amongst households that have had members who suffer or have died of AIDS.

The concern over AIDS has become so serious that the UN Secretary General in January in 2003 sent his special envoys, James Morris, for Humanitarian Needs in Southern Africa, Stephen Lewis for HIV/AIDS in Africa, to compile a special report on the impacts of AIDS in Southern Africa. The Mission, was initiated on the occasion of the growing food crises in Southern Africa. The Morris and Lewis report notes:

**“The world knows that HIV/AIDS is fatal. The world also knows that southern Africa, where some of the highest HIV prevalence rates are found, has suffered from serious food shortages affecting millions of impoverished people. But the world clearly does not yet realize the immediate and long-term implications of a crises caused by the conjunction of HIV/AIDS with chronic poverty, erratic rainfall, problematic government policies and natural resource degradation, or the urgent need it signals for a profound shift in humanitarian and development strategies.”** (Morris and Lewis, 2003)

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<sup>33</sup> In this independent article, Lewis, quotes figures of the impacts of AIDS on farm-workers. About 7 million agricultural workers have died since 1985, and the FAO estimates that another 16 million will die by 2020.

<sup>34</sup> It looks at four key issues: changes in dependency patterns; losses of assets and skills associated with adult mortality; the burden of care for sick adults and orphaned children; and the vicious interaction between malnutrition and HIV infection.

The Report noted too that the food crises in Southern Africa was being deepened as a result of AIDS. Their report suggests that the impact is so significant that conventional approaches to development will have to be revisited or reorganized to deal with the new challenges.

**“ ...the overwhelming impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on levels of vulnerability led to the conclusion that the traditional pattern of humanitarian assistance was not a viable option to adequately address the needs”. (Morris and Lewis, 2003)**

With the weakening of labour and its numbers as a result of the pandemic, the envoys recommend at more radical approaches to agricultural development be considered. Agencies must pursue a strategy of “capacity replenishment”. This would include strategies that are able to recruit labour from elsewhere, including international volunteers. In addition, the promotion of mechanization or any labour saving mechanisms needed to be reconsidered as a primary vehicle for propping up production, and in so doing reduce the burden on women, and infected households. Morris and Lewis also stress on the importance of including within strategies on social-safety nets the complementary role of value-added activities. These will require that new skills be taught and supported through ODA.

## **9. WAY FORWARD AND CONCLUSION**

In seeking to answer the question should we engage NEPAD or not, the question would rather be then: what are the consequences of not doing so? Active engagement should not suggest-for those who are most conspiratorial-that this is an acceptance of both the political process and content of NEPAD. This active engagement has to be founded on a degree of pragmatism. Hitherto, all the negative diatribes-and some commentary within this certainly being of value and valid-has been to be overly speculative about both the workings, intent and outcomes of NEPAD. A course of action that serves to criticise at a distance, without offering solutions is self-defeating, and often unduly callous in nature.

NEPAD cannot, imaginably, posture itself as being solely responsible for Africa’s development and success. This would be an unreasonable and foolish expectation. It is perhaps a catalyst, which is likely to spawn a range of development interventions. NEPAD should be seen as an opportunity to engage the debate on Africa’s future, and what kind of development intervention and support is most appropriate for Africans. Active engagement, with a spirit of pragmatism, is one manner of opening this space for debate. For no development paradigm is conclusive, or the final word on the matter. Surely more can be argued and said? Surely, by not engaging, we allow old models and paradigms to linger or sneak in unexpectedly into uncarved terrain? It is no longer a question of not whether too, but how?

A number of areas following the analysis above lend themselves to further work that can be developed or elaborated upon. I will highlight those areas that are the most pressing:

1. **A debate on Africa's agricultural model:** As previously alluded: should the existing models and definitions be accepted? There is some indication within the NEPAD text, and the CAADP, that make reference to market orientated agriculture, and notions of improved productivity rely on certain assumptions about African agriculture. ***The two fundamental assumptions that may require review are: classical productivity models and the idea of agricultural stimulation through export led growth.*** The CAADP already has a few gaps that need to be addressed. There seems to be scope in enhancing the substance of this component of the framework. NEPAD should be encouraged to establish a forum for lively discussion on its agricultural model so that it is more realistically tailored to suit specific unique conditions and situations. There is a need to interrogate these assumptions in countries that are facing the spectre of the impacts of AIDS, the potential impacts of which need to be studied with some degree of detail. In addition, different types of production demand different kinds of resources inputs. These realities alone would suggest that a uniform intervention aimed at boosting production is not tenable, and that different systems of agriculture require a variety of solutions. ***For subsistence and small farmers, integrated livestock and crop production may be the most feasible and sustainable forms of production***
  
2. **Livelihoods consideration:** Here considerable work is needed. In particular the forward linkages within agriculture, such as agro-processing, and non-farm activity, i.e. how agriculture can play a supportive role to increasing income activities in other sectors. ***Of particular concern is the lack of grasp or commentary on the issue of landless people in Africa.*** Their growing numbers suggest that a special package of programmes need to be designed not only to support their welfare needs, but better integrate their labour and skills within the agricultural economy. Finally, it has been pointed out that considerable room exists for linkages of agricultural livelihood strategies with those of others such as biodiversity, fisheries, and forestry. ***A livelihoods paradigm-in the comprehensive sense-needs to be built into agricultural planning.*** These linkages are often not made because of the discrete way in which planning is done, or institutional habits that have not been shaken off. ***The mix of farm and non-farm activity is a pattern of production that is intrinsic to the management of risk in periods of uncertainty and vulnerability. This is an important feature of drylands farming. Perhaps this is a pointer to policy-makers and experts that a more flexible and dynamic model is needed.*** Often the limitations on being sectorally fixated is that it only allows a focus on one part of the puzzle, and not the entire picture. Rural and urban poor rely increasingly also on forest, fisheries and biological resources for food, material and other resources to support their livelihoods. For instance it is estimated that about 15 million people in Africa earn cash income from forest related activities. (Kaimowitz, undated) Dependency and resource exploitation is stretched if the poor are made to rely on one sector for their livelihoods. Hence, a sustainable livelihoods approach may stimulate lateral thinking, and bringing together the different lines of interaction between sectors and interest. Within the livelihoods paradigm broader issues of natural resource management concerns are taken into account, including issues of gender, and institution building. In the case of gender, the CAADP is quite thin on the special concerns that surround gender dynamics and their importance to agricultural development, given the significant role women play in agriculture.

- 3. Technology, infrastructure and NRM practices:** Investments in infrastructure and technology, are part of the solution to improving agricultural productivity. They would vary from the high cost range to low-cost appropriate technologies and infrastructural solutions. Perhaps the fear often is that infrastructure and the choice of technology are based on decisions made for their iconic value rather than their practical utility. ***Africa may burden itself with a 'Rolls Royce' model of agriculture which it can ill-afford, and force it to live beyond its means.*** A further challenge is to ensure continued investment in improved management practices as far as natural resources go. Technological and infrastructural problems cannot fundamentally reverse what are behavioural habits and the existence of perverse incentives that encourage inappropriate use of natural resources. These are deeply sociological and institutional in nature. They can only be rectified through long-term 'soft' measures, and empowering individuals and communities through improved rights and access. A key element of which is to strengthen local institutional capacity, which is continuously being emasculated in Africa. ***Different systems of property rights, and in some cases the lack of tenure security has spawned the emergence of a multiple range of agricultural systems.*** These can roughly be classified as: shifting cultivation<sup>35</sup>, peasant labour and share-cropping, communal, freehold, and State systems.. In dry-lands, devolved system of natural resource management may provide optimal solutions for addressing some of the natural resource management challenges that persist.
- 4. Diversifying the network of partnerships:** Hitherto, NEPAD has been viewed as forum for governments and intergovernmental multi-lateral and bilateral agencies. This is all well and good. However, capacity in these agencies is limited. Given NEPAD's unsettled thinking on its relationship with civil society and the private sector, there is room to expand their involvement beyond the definition of policy issues, but also inclusion in developing NEPAD's technical capacity and support to implementation. NEPAD's capacity to accomplish its enormous ambition is reliant on how it forges alliances and working relations with a range of institutions that are actively involved in agricultural development.

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