

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS (DESA)

Support to NEPAD

Period of Report: July 2006 to June 2007

Collaboration with other UN agencies in support of NEPAD

Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM)

In collaboration with various UNDP country offices, DPADM supports poverty-reduction and income-generation strategies in line with the implementation of NEPAD. In Mauritania, the Division supported the preparation of a poverty-reduction export strategy in the main economic sectors for private sector entities. A workshop took place in February 2007 to promote dialogue on the strategy. In Niger, the Division supported a project aimed at promoting the creation of micro-enterprises through a guarantee fund and technical assistance. The Division also supports the preparation and monitoring of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) in Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Togo, Chad, Burundi and DRC.

Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)

On 5-8 December 2006, the Division organized a regional workshop in collaboration with ECA in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Representatives from 36 national machineries participated in the workshop, in which a regional e-network for African national machineries was established. A web-based information portal¹ will be the central hub of the e-network and will be used by national machineries to share and access relevant information and resources. To date, the project has enhanced the capacity of national machineries in Africa to use and benefit from information and communication technologies (ICT). It has also promoted increased awareness of, and involvement in, ICT policy processes at the national level and facilitated the sharing of good practices in using ICT for the achievement of gender equality. It further developed strategies for using ICT for advocacy and information-sharing, as well as strengthened understanding of and commitment to networking among national machineries.

DAW has also worked to support African Member States in the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (the Convention) at the request of the Governments concerned and in full collaboration and partnership with the United Nations agencies at country level, beginning in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

In Sierra Leone, DAW undertook a multi-phase programme of technical assistance to support the Government in the implementation of the Convention. Over a three-year period, DAW provided sustained support, which, in 2006, included capacity-building for

¹ See www.uneca.org/ngmafrica

over 30 government officials from different ministries and representatives of civil society, and support for the national validation of the country's draft report under article 18 of the Convention. As a result, there is now increased awareness and capacity in Sierra Leone to implement the Convention. The Government completed its combined periodic report and submitted it to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in December 2006.

A similar programme of sustained support and capacity-building is being implemented in Liberia. DAW's first support in 2006 was provided in the framework of a high-level consultation mission that identified gaps and challenges faced by the Government in its efforts to implement the Convention and developed recommendations for priority action by both governmental and non-governmental bodies.

Other activities include DAW sponsorship of three NGO representatives from Africa to attend the 51st (2007) session of the Commission on the Status of Women under the Yvonne Hubert Fellowship programme. This supports the capacity-building of civil society in Africa to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women within the broader context of Africa's development.

Institutional support extended to the NEPAD Secretariat

DPADM researches key knowledge management issues of relevance to NEPAD. The Division is, at present, analyzing e-readiness in Sub-Saharan Africa. The NEPAD Secretariat should be a contributor to this regional report which is expected to be completed by the third quarter of 2008. The regional reports, offshoots of the UN Global E-Government Readiness Reports, focus on a qualitative assessment of regional issues, constraints, and solutions to regional problems in deploying ICTs for e-government. The regional report on Sub-Saharan Africa should be a useful tool in development planning and implementation by African governments, as well as for obtaining bilateral and multi-lateral development assistance for deploying ICTs in enhancing public service delivery.

Advocacy work in support of Africa's development

Development Policy and Analysis Division (DPAD)

The theme of the *World Economic and Social Survey 2006* (WESS 2006) is diverging growth and development. Such a theme is broadly in line with the concept of marginalization, which is the underlying justification for the design and implementation of NEPAD. Also, WESS came up with some policy measures aimed at reducing international economic divergence. These measures covered part of NEPAD priorities, including: human development, infrastructure improvement, economic and political governance, and diversification,

Human development and infrastructure improvement: Evidence from WESS 2006 lent strong support to the view that improvements in education and health were positively associated with strong economic growth. Although important, human development alone

was not considered a sufficient condition for sustained economic growth. Other factors were just as important, including the need to improve infrastructure. Indeed, WESS 2006, as well as the *World Economic Situation and Prospects* (WESP) 2007 suggested that the improvement in infrastructure has the potential to boost supply response and enable countries to achieve high and sustainable growth rates.

Economic and political governance: In view of the need to improve infrastructure and human capital, WESS 2006 advocated increased and sustained levels of public spending. This implies creating additional fiscal space for long-term investment in infrastructure and human development. Along these lines, WESS 2006 also called for more space for counter-cyclical macroeconomic policies. This means striking a balance between fiscal and monetary prudence and flexibility and ensuring that macroeconomic stability entails not only a price stability goal but also a real stability goal.

Finally, successful governance reform is viewed in WESS 2006 as a process of building well-functioning public institutions that are largely accepted and trusted by private agents. Accordingly, promoting gradual and home-grown institutional reforms was recommended.

Diversification: WESS 2006 found productivity growth to be largely generated by changes in production structure, especially through shifts of resources from lower productivity activities (agriculture) to higher productivity sectors (industry and services). Countries that were more successful in achieving such transformations are those that built dynamic domestic linkages, while at the same time reaping the benefits of international trade and investment. Thus, the key policy message is that active industrial policies matter.

Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM)

In support of Africa's overall development goals, DPADM has been involved in the implementation of the Governance and Public Administration program of NEPAD in close collaboration with (i) parliaments in Africa, (ii) ministers of local government, (iii) ministers of public service, (iv) the Africa Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM), and (v) the Africa Union (AU) Commission.

(i) The Division and the Pan-African Parliament are collaborating on strengthening parliamentary information systems in Africa, using Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

(ii) A conference on Participatory Development Planning and Budgeting was held in Maseru, Lesotho in August 2006, to build leadership capacity for poverty reduction in Africa. The conference was instrumental in enhancing the awareness, knowledge and skills in participatory development planning and budgeting, among ministers and officials responsible for local governments. The Division and the regional assemblies, as well as local governments in Africa are also collaborating within the Euro-African Partnerships for Decentralized Governance Project to strengthen capacities of local governments.

(iii) The Division financed the travel of the Bureau of the Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Public Service which took place in Ethiopia in December 2006. Among the items discussed was the implementation of the Charter for the Public Service in Africa.

DESA sponsored and facilitated the meeting of ministers, central government officials, local government officials, parliamentarians and representatives of civil society in Addis Ababa, in December 2006 to discuss how to enhance the trust citizens in Africa have in their governments.

(iv) AAPAM brings together senior public officials, as well as experts in public administration and management in Africa. The Division has been collaborating with AAPAM to enhance the knowledge and skills of public servants in the region. AAPAM is now a member of the United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN).

(v) The Division collaborated with the AU Commission to strengthen DESA's Portal on Conflict Transformation to reach out to public, private and civil society organizations that are engaged in managing conflicts in Africa.

The Division has coordinated the Africa Governance Inventory (AGI) for a number of years. Given diminishing funds for the coordination, the Division engaged in discussions last year with the NEPAD Secretariat, the Africa Peer Review Mechanisms (APRM) Secretariat and the AU Commission to arrange for an agreed institution in Africa to continue the coordination. Two meetings were held: one for the focal points of AGI and of APRM in Kigali, Rwanda and the second for AGI focal points and the AU Commission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD)

Support to NEPAD focused on a Ministerial meeting held in Johannesburg, South Africa in November 2006, entitled "NEPAD: Towards an African Regional Social Policy". The meeting was convened by DSPD/DESA and the Government of South Africa. Ministers and senior officials of 13 Southern African Development Community (SADC) Governments endorsed a draft Regional Social Policy (potentially to become a NEPAD Action Plan), which operationalizes the AU Commission for Labour and Social Affairs' Draft Social Policy Framework for Africa.

DSPD's mandate to bring Social Policy to NEPAD originated at the UN Commission for Social Development, which urged DESA to strengthen social dimensions within NEPAD. Rising poverty levels and social exclusion faced by most African countries require changes in the way NEPAD works; NEPAD Action Plans having mostly focused on economic and governance topics, leaving social development lagging behind. Comprehensive social policies are needed to achieve Africa's social and economic developments objectives, as endorsed by 13 Ministers of SADC, in what is known as the "Johannesburg Declaration in Support of an African Regional Social Policy " (24 November 2006).