

OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ADVISER ON AFRICA (OSAA)

Support to NEPAD

Period of Report: July 2006 to June 2007

The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA) provides support for the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) through its advocacy, analytical work and reporting at the global level.

Advocacy

OSAA, the convener of the Advocacy Cluster, is tasked with coordinating global advocacy in support of NEPAD and acting as the NEPAD focal point at the United Nations Headquarters. In line with the priorities established by NEPAD, OSAA has updated its advocacy and communications strategy to develop messages at the global level. The Office will engage in a series of "in house", inter-agency and global activities to build support amongst Member States, civil society, and international organizations for Africa's development. The campaign involves the expansion of appropriate advocacy content on the website and the development of other advocacy tools, such as publications, exhibits, targeted briefings, as well as close cooperation with parliaments, universities and other global actors. Furthermore, members of the advocacy cluster held two meetings, in April 2007 (in Ghana) and June 2007 (in New York) to improve coherence and jointly develop clear messages and projects.

Institutional challenges in implementing NEPAD

OSAA continues its efforts to draw attention to and tackle the challenges that are still impeding the implementation of NEPAD. Weak institutional capacity to manage and implement development programmes has emerged as one of the major constraints limiting the progress of the implementation of NEPAD at all levels – continental, regional and national. In October 2006, OSAA organized a panel discussion on "*Institutional challenges in implementing NEPAD*" to coincide with the joint debate of the General Assembly on African issues. The panel discussion allowed participants of diverse expertise and policy experience to share their perspectives on possible ways and means to overcome the institutional challenges impeding the implementation of NEPAD. Participants emphasized the need to further enhance efforts in a number of areas, including: (i) Addressing the resource constraints hampering the implementation of NEPAD, through timely honouring of commitments made by Africa's development partners, mobilization of African domestic resources and the creation of an environment conducive to foreign direct investment in African countries; (ii) Strengthening the institutional capacity at regional and national levels, in particular, the capacity of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to execute NEPAD regional projects; (iii) Development of models and best practices in the area of integrating the priorities of NEPAD and the outcomes of the APRM into the national policies, processes and

programmes; (iv) Further engagement of various stakeholder groups, such as the private sector and the media, in the implementation of NEPAD.

Private sector

The private sector's critical role in the implementation of NEPAD has been well recognized by African leaders and the private sector itself. In support of NEPAD's emphasis on the central role of the private sector in contributing to economic growth and job creation in Africa, OSAA undertook a study on the *Contribution of the private sector to the implementation of NEPAD*, which was presented in October 2006. The review revealed that the participation of African private sector enterprises in the implementation of NEPAD regional projects has been limited due to a number of constraints, including in particular the lack of adequate financial resources, lack of appropriate policy and project environment, and weak capacity of the RECs. The study proposes several measures for better engagement of the private sector, including creating effective and innovative partnerships, strengthening the capabilities of Governments and RECs to broker partnerships with the private sector, and providing long-term capital to fund NEPAD's key projects. A follow-up study is under preparation on the *Private sector's institutional response to NEPAD*, in three subregions: East Africa, West Africa and Southern Africa, which seeks to explore whether the private sector associations and groups are organised for, aware of the opportunities and have the motivation to participate in the implementation of NEPAD programmes. The findings of the study will be discussed at an Expert Group Meeting scheduled for late 2007.

OSAA contributed to the organization of the annual *Bending the Arc* summit held in September 2006 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, which brought together more than 100 leaders from the private sector, civil society, the United Nations system, and donor countries. The summit was chaired by Mr. Firmino Mucavele, Chief Executive of NEPAD, Mr. Legwaila Joseph Legwaila, the Special Adviser on Africa, Mr. Amir Dossal, Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP), and Mr. Bamanga Tukur, Chairman of the NEPAD Business Group. Participants explored the steps that business can take to help Africa achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the measures African nations and their international development partners need to take to provide their support. Strong emphasis was placed on the need to promote Africa as an attractive investment destination.

Emerging role of African Regional Organizations in peacebuilding

A number of African regional organizations, which were originally conceived as economic institutions focusing on intra-African trade and integration, have become key pillars of Africa's peace and security architecture over the last 15 years. While some African regional organizations have gained extensive experience in peacekeeping, their extensive role and growing capacity in conflict prevention and peacebuilding has received less attention.

In response to this information gap, OSAA prepared a publication entitled “*The Emerging Role of African Regional Organizations in Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding*” which provides an overview of the range of activities carried out by African regional organizations as well as their capacity and challenges, and which further explores the modalities of UN cooperation with regional organisations. Findings indicate that some African regional organizations seek to play a key policy and coordinating role with regard to conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts in Africa over the coming years and that these efforts could be enhanced by increased capacity-building support and a stronger and better coordinated partnership with the UN.

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

In recent years, several African countries have initiated peace processes after many years of armed conflict. Post-conflict strategies offered the opportunity to develop disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes for ex-combatants. The importance of successful DDR programmes to prevent the recurrence of violence and create conditions for sustainable peace and development has been long recognized. Successful DDR programmes have significantly contributed to consolidating peace processes, regional security and economic development.

In order to contribute to peace and development in Africa, OSAA organized the First International Conference on DDR and Stability in Africa from 21 to 23 June 2005 in Freetown, Sierra Leone. One of the recommendations of the conference was to strengthen the network of African DDR practitioners and build DDR capacity among African stakeholders by organizing, every two years, a conference to enable African countries to share experiences among themselves and with their bilateral and multilateral partners.

The Second International Conference on DDR and Stability in Africa, which took place in Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of the Congo) from 12 to 14 June 2007, responded to this recommendation. Over 200 practitioners and experts from 23 African countries, the donor community and international organizations attended the meeting.

The overall objective of the Kinshasa Conference was to improve the effectiveness of DDR programmes in Africa and to promote peace and development in post-conflict situations. In particular, the conference aimed at strengthening and building the capacity of African DDR practitioners and experts by providing them with a forum to share their experiences; formulate recommendations on best practices and strategies for DDR programmes in Africa; enable and facilitate dialogue in Africa on selected issues of special importance in order to enhance understanding and develop recommendations, in particular on: a) the linkage between DDR and the Security Sector Reform (SSR), b) DDR and Transitional Justice, c) children and women associated with armed forces and armed groups and d) combatants on foreign soil (COFS). The Conference drew further attention of African and international stakeholders to the importance of improving the overall political, social and economic environments in post-conflict countries, within a broad peacebuilding framework.

Youth

OSAA convened an Expert Group Meeting on “*Youth in Africa: Participation of Youth as Partners in Peace and Development in Post-Conflict Countries*”, in Windhoek, Namibia from 14 to 16 November 2006. The Expert Group Meeting was organized in cooperation with the Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD) of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

The purpose of the Expert Group Meeting was to critically analyze the complexity and gravity of the challenges facing youth (15-24 years) in post-conflict countries in Africa, explore opportunities to collaborate with young people as partners in peacebuilding, conflict prevention and development, highlighting the positive role youth can play and promoting a positive image of young people as a key resource of stability, peace and sustainable growth and development in Africa. The main outcome of the Expert Group Meeting was a set of action-oriented policy recommendations, based on the analysis provided by the experts and the outcomes of the youth-led interactive working groups.

From the review and discussions at the meeting, a number of critical issues emerged. It was recognized that young people in post-conflict societies were facing a variety of severe challenges. The youth were trapped in a vicious cycle of violence, poverty, illiteracy, lack of income, and vulnerability that had been exacerbated by the armed conflicts. They often lacked access to education, health, and other opportunities as basic infrastructure had been destroyed and human resources were displaced. Many youth, especially those with limited education and economic opportunities, were easily mobilized for political purposes. Unfortunately, youth, stereotypically, were seen as negative agents, closely associated with violence, delinquency and drug abuse, and as a result, continued to be marginalized from the decision-making processes that affected their lives at the local, national and regional levels.

The meeting highlighted the successful reintegration of youth in mainstream economic activity as a major element of a post-conflict peace and security strategy. It was agreed that, in addition to creating jobs/work, it was equally important to prepare youth to become good employable citizens and productive members of society. This required long-term systematic support for their capacity building, including literacy and skills training, civic and peace education, and a fast-track education system for older ex-combatants. The meeting discussed the urgent need for policy-makers to develop clear youth-oriented strategies and policies such as setting youth issues as a national priority; identifying existing youth networks and youth leaders and involving them in policy-making processes; exploring policy options; providing opportunities for policy dialogue with youth, and building institutional capacity.