



**Office of the Special Adviser on Africa**

**Report on the High-Level Panel Discussion on “NEPAD and  
the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): Progress,  
Challenges and the Way Forward”**

**New York**

**(7 October 2011)**

## **Introduction**

The High-Level Panel Discussion on “NEPAD and the MDGs: Progress, Challenges and the Way Forward” was co-organized by UN-OSAA, UN-DPI and the African Union’s NEPAD Agency as part of the events marking the commemoration of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) at the United Nations Headquarters.

## **Objectives**

The Panel Discussion provided a unique opportunity to take stock of the achievements, progress and challenges of NEPAD over the past 10 years and its contribution to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and to chart the way forward for a successful implementation of this comprehensive Africa-owned and Africa-led development programme in the coming decade.

Specifically, the Panel discussion aimed at raising awareness of the NEPAD Agency within the UN system and with other international development partners, including foundations, the private sector, NGOs, think tanks, and academia; at sharing lessons learned from the partnerships and at exploring new ways to strengthen these partnerships between the NEPAD Agency and international development partners. The Panel discussion also entailed reflection on the success and remaining challenges for actualizing Africa’s transformation agenda, including the necessity of mobilizing domestic and external resources; and to encourage the implementation of NEPAD Agency’s priorities through reliable monitoring and assessment mechanism on shared goals and commitments in support of the continent’s sustainable development. Furthermore, the discussion was expected to identify how the international community, including the UN system, could better support this flagship programme.

## **Participation and Format**

The Panel was moderated by Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa; and was addressed by high-level panellists including H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, President of the 66<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly; Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General; Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, Chief Executive Officer of the NEPAD Agency; H.E. Prof. Amos Sawyer, Member of the Panel of Eminent Personalities of the APRM; Dr. Namanga A. Ngongi, President of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA); and Mr. Emmanuel Nnadozie, Director of Economic Development and NEPAD Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (on behalf of Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa).

Following the statements and presentations delivered by the panellists, the moderator opened the floor to all participants for an interactive discussion. The participants included UN member states, members of the NEPAD Steering Committee,

representatives from the African Union Commission, NEPAD Agency, APRM Secretariat, representatives of the UN system, civil society, academia and the private sector.

### **Panel Discussion**

After welcoming the panellists and participants, Mr. Diarra recalled the special occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary and commended the CEO of the NEPAD Agency and his team for a successful first decade. He then briefly shared his views on the topic “NEPAD and the MDGs: Progress, Challenges and the Way Forward” to set the stage for the discussion. Mr. Diarra emphasized that the 10th anniversary was an opportune time to reflect on achievements of the NEPAD programme in its first decade, the remaining challenges and the way forward. He then stressed that Africa remained a top priority of the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, and reminded the audience that the NEPAD initiative drew on the Millennium Declaration and shared many of its goals including the MDGs. In this regard, he valued the choice of both development frameworks for the exercises. On the way forward, Mr. Diarra highlighted the importance of supporting African resource mobilization and public-private-partnerships to finance the implementation of NEPAD priorities. Mr. Diarra proceeded with the introduction of the keynote speakers and panellists.

### **Keynote addresses**

#### **(a) H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, President of the 66th session of the United Nations General Assembly**

In his statement, Mr. Al-Nasser congratulated NEPAD, Africa’s flagship programme for socio-economic development, for its contribution to remarkable economic success and social progress in Africa over the past decade. While acknowledging the remaining challenges, he illustrated his commitment to address them by the focus given to sustainable development and global prosperity at the 66<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly. He acknowledged the role of NEPAD in mobilizing political and financial commitments for Africa’s development.

He then announced the launch of informal consultations, co-facilitated by Kenya and Sweden, on a proposed monitoring mechanism to review commitments towards Africa’s development needs. Mr. Al-Nasser also highlighted the need to look beyond aid while strengthening partnerships with NEPAD in the context of a productive global partnership which includes mutually beneficial trade and investment relationships as well as global climate protection. At the end, he reaffirmed the commitment of the United Nations General Assembly to address Africa’s development needs, achieve the MDGs and strengthen global partnership within the NEPAD framework.

#### **(b) Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro, Deputy-Secretary-General, United Nations**

In her statement, Dr. Migiro expressed her appreciation on the examination of Africa's progress towards the achievement of the MDGs. She then provided a brief historical background on NEPAD insisting on its home-grown nature, mentioning that it was designed as a launch pad to move Africa to a prosperous future and address poverty eradication and sustainable growth. She highlighted that it was built around Africa's own human resources, in particular women. While appreciating the efforts of Africans and their development partners, Dr. Migiro highlighted the contributions of the CAADP and the APRM. As she was praising the achievements, Dr. Migiro noted the commendable economic progress reached in Africa, progress in health, education, agriculture and food security, and gender empowerment, together contributing to MDG gains.

Dr. Migiro, however, noted the limited progress in halving poverty and highlighted key challenges including access to decent employment, maternal mortality, poor water sanitation, conflict, climate change, drought and desertification. Dr. Migiro reaffirmed the commitment of the United Nations' support for Africa's development and elaborated on the actions taken in this regard. She highlighted the efforts by the United Nations Secretary-General and herself within the MDG Africa Steering group and working group in mobilizing support for financing and partnerships to work on goals that Africa is off track. She introduced the role of the MDG Acceleration framework in assisting national governments to overcome key obstacles to progress. At the end, Dr. Migiro emphasized the importance of leadership and called for the implementation of commitments towards NEPAD and the achievement of the MDGs.

## **Statements**

### **(a) Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, Chief Executive Officer of the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency**

In his intervention, Dr. Mayaki expressed gratitude to all the partners of NEPAD. He briefed the meeting on the role and efforts of NEPAD as a strategy to attain the MDGs. He highlighted the various achievements of NEPAD by linking them to specific MDGs such as CAADP to MDG 1, NEPAD e-school initiative and NEPAD school feeding programme to MDG 2, NEPAD Gender framework to MDG 3, health policies such as the harmonization of medicines regulations to MDGs 4 and 5, several initiatives like the NEPAD TerrAfrica programme, the NEPAD environment initiative, the great green wall and the activities of the African Ministers Conference on Environment (AMCEN) in support of MDG 7 and the efforts in strengthening partnerships through regional integration and the participation to Global Fora like the G8 and G20 meetings to meet MDG 8.

While raising the key challenges to implementation, Dr. Mayaki emphasized the need to revert to economic planning to cover the multi-sectoral challenges to sustainable

development. He appreciated the critical support provided by the United Nations over the past decade and recognized the increasing contribution of South-South Cooperation to Africa's development efforts.

**(b) Prof. Amos Sawyer, Member of the Panel of Eminent Personalities of the African Peer Review Mechanism**

In his presentation, Prof. Sawyer elaborated on the origins, objectives and structure of the APRM as well as on the peer review process. Prof. Sawyer emphasised the inclusiveness and voluntary nature of this African initiative. While encouraging African member states to join the mechanism, he noted that the membership comprised thirty (30) African countries among which fourteen (14) had been reviewed. He highlighted some of the positive impacts brought by the APRM reviews such as the broadening of political space as well as the promotion of social and inclusive dialogue and gave concrete examples such as the deepening of democratic culture in Ghana and the reduction in foreign aid dependency in Kenya.

Prof. Sawyer presented some of the key challenges including the voluntary nature of the mechanism and the related failure of some countries to accede to the process, resource constraints and insufficient implementation of the National Programme of Action. While acknowledging the support received from the partners and specifically the strategic partners (African Development Bank, UNDP, UNECA), he called for a stronger partnership between APRM and NEPAD to align practical and institutional arrangements in the deliverables.

**(c) Dr. Namanga Ngongi, President of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)**

After appreciating the innovative role of NEPAD, Dr. Namanga explained the alignment of the work of AGRA to NEPAD's goals and CAADP framework and their partnership to accelerate development in agriculture. He emphasized the catalyzing factor of CAADP in establishing the green revolution across Africa based on tangible results in Rwanda, Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Tanzania, Zambia and others. Dr. Namanga highlighted the positive changes taking place on the African agricultural sector to address food security. He also advocated for an African-led agriculture transformation based on research led by African scientists and political leadership.

After reaffirming AGRA's commitment to a strengthened partnership with NEPAD, Dr. Namanga highlighted some of the key achievements, including the establishment of an African Fertilizer Agribusiness Partnership to address the supply side constraints of the fertilizer value-chain. On the way forward, he outlined three areas to strengthen AGRA's partnership with NEPAD, including (i) increasing political commitment and resources for African agriculture; (ii) advocacy for increased financing for African agriculture; and (iii) development of financing mechanisms in collaboration with the private financial sector to improve agricultural financing.

**(d) Mr. Emmanuel Nnadozie, Director of Economic Development and NEPAD Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (on behalf of Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa)**

In the statement delivered on behalf of the Executive Secretary of UNECA, Mr. Nnadozie emphasized the importance of the nexus between NEPAD and the MDGs in achieving sustainable development in Africa noting that the former could be described as the framework to achieve the latter in Africa. Mr. Nnadozie gave a few examples to illustrate the common purposes and mutuality of objectives such as poverty reduction through agriculture and food security, or the Consolidated Plan of Action (CPA) for Science and Technology intended to provide knowledge that will backstop the educational, health and environmental aims of the MDGs in Africa. He then recalled the success of the MDGs in galvanizing political support for human development in the sense of influencing policy discourse and as a basis for measuring progress in achieving consensually agreed goals, targets and indicators. He highlighted some of the key progress in both development goals, including poverty, hunger, education, and gender empowerment notably raised in the joint UNECA-AUC-AfDB and UNDP annual regional report on Africa's progress towards the MDGs.

Mr. Nnadozie then presented some of the significant remaining challenges to the implementation of NEPAD, including the level of international support to Africa, the role of the private sector, mobilization of domestic resources, the role and state of other institutions governing development in Africa. He highlighted the main initiatives and mechanisms through which UNECA plays a critical role in extending support to the African Union Commission and its NEPAD Agency such as the Regional Consultation Mechanism for Africa and the Ten-Year Capacity-Building initiative. On the way forward, Mr. Nnadozie underscored the need for coherence in policy-making and partnerships with Africa, as well as for the United Nations support to NEPAD. At the end, he mentioned the ongoing discussion on post-2015 development agenda and noted the need to translate the strategic vision and objectives of NEPAD into deliberations and eventual outcomes. He commended Dr. Mayaki on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary and reaffirmed UNECA's continued strong commitment to supporting Africa's regional, subregional and national efforts to achieve the MDGs and implement the NEPAD agenda.

### **Interactive Discussion**

- All the participants welcomed and congratulated the panellists on their presentations. They also expressed their congratulations for the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of NEPAD. Development partners seized the opportunity to reaffirm their commitment to support NEPAD and Africa's development.
- During the discussion, the impact of the global economic and financial crises on Africa's development strategy was discussed, and the consequences of the shift towards a green economy were raised. Interest was also expressed on a broad

range of issues affecting Africa's development, including the post-2015 development agenda of the UN, mobilization of support from non-traditional donors and the use of innovative financing, involvement of academia and civil society organizations in the implementation of NEPAD priorities, the need for orienting domestic resource mobilized towards agriculture and infrastructure, the importance of meeting commitments and pledges such as capacity building of African institutions by development partners and the ratification and implementation of African Union decisions by African member states and the involvement of Regional Economic Communities in NEPAD implementation. The contribution of the diaspora, and in particular the issues of brain-drain and brain-gain were also raised. The discussion also covered the establishment of financing mechanisms for agriculture.

- Concerns on the potential threats posed by the ongoing global financial and economic crises to Africa's development and development financing in particular were raised. This adverse situation could be regarded as an opportunity for Africa because the crises led to a shift of global economic activity focus from the virtual to the real economy. In this context, Africa's high density of natural resources was considered a key potential asset.
- Along the same lines, the low level of aid delivery and aid effectiveness were highlighted in the context of the massive resource requirements for the implementation of the NEPAD programme. Domestic resource mobilization, the mobilization of resources from non-traditional donors in the framework of South-South Cooperation, as well as the use of innovative financing were raised as important sources to explore.
- Domestic resource mobilization should supplement the shortfalls in the financing of the partnership to improve policy space in Africa. This could be achieved by improving public revenue collection and orient the spending towards agriculture and infrastructure development.
- It was noted that domestic resource mobilization was making great strides in Africa, especially in light of the impacts of the global financial and economic crises on the continent. The number of countries where resources from development assistance exceed domestically mobilized resources has fallen dramatically in recent years. Furthermore, domestic resource mobilization is a way to shift from aid dependency to development effectiveness and for this reason will remain a priority of NEPAD.
- The following key challenges of domestic resource mobilization were raised: taxing natural resources; capacity for tax administration; and the deepening of the tax base. Regarding non-traditional donors, it was noted that they invested more in non-social sectors such as infrastructure. NEPAD was already considering innovative financing as a key area to work on.

- Another concern focused on the shift towards the green economy and its implication on Africa's development. It was noted that NEPAD should promote green growth on a continent where less than 7 percent of the population has access to modern energy. The promotion of green energies cannot only accelerate growth, but also lead to more inclusive growth. In this regard, the African Union Commission and its NEPAD Agency were working on a strategic framework on biofuels. At the same time, climate change, which is not Africa's responsibility, will affect the continent strongly and adversely, so there were calls for more support for Africa in climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts.
- Development partners, traditional and non traditional, underscored their contributions in the area of agriculture, infrastructure, healthcare, human development. For example, the Spanish government has contributed €10 million through the five-year NEPAD Spanish Fund for African Women Empowerment.
- Regarding the implementation of NEPAD programme and Africa's development agenda, concerns over mutual accountability on commitments were raised. On the one hand, it was noted that the international community efforts had to be met, as in the case of capacity-building of African continental and subregional institutions. On the other hand, African countries were urged to ratify and implement African Union decisions. In this context, the forthcoming consultative process at the United Nations General Assembly on a monitoring mechanism to review Africa's development needs offered some potential solution to the mutual accountability on development commitments.
- As for the inclusiveness on the implementation of NEPAD, consideration was given to the involvement of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in translating plans into concrete action. Further, efforts were underway to raise awareness on NEPAD in the academia through lectures such as the one planned at Columbia University and in engaging with civil society and parliamentarians.
- The importance of security and governance nexus was highly considered as a prerequisite to sustainable development. In this context, food security has been raised as a potential challenge to which measures have been applied. Among the efforts towards food security, the roadmap to improve agricultural production in Africa was prepared through the cooperation with China. Within the G20 framework, price fluctuations of commodities as well as food and the establishment of a food supply reserve system were undertaken. For instance at the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), a system was put in place to own and collect food reserves for food crises outbreaks.
- Beyond, financing mechanisms to develop agriculture were highlighted, such as those promoting credit guarantee and risk sharing schemes for small farm holders. In this connection, the public sector could leverage its resources and involve the private sector in agriculture financing, leaving more public resources for research funding.

- On the way forward, the critical issue of reverting to development planning in Africa was raised to address the comprehensive multisectoral priorities including the MDGs. In this context, China's experience was highlighted as a useful example for Africa.
- On the APRM, it was noted that its comprehensive and broad approach to enhance good economic and political governance would contribute to the achievement of all the MDGs. The support that the APRM has received from strategic international partners such as the African Development Bank, UNDP and UNECA, was also noted.
- The critical role and contribution of the diaspora as the 6<sup>th</sup> African region was acknowledged and appreciated. Some issues for consideration to limit the brain drain included: dual citizenship, facilitation of relocation, institutions to safeguard investments of the diaspora, and the transmission of knowledge back to the continent. In this regard, it was noted that Africa is lagging behind other regions in the generation of knowledge because of the focus on primary education. To address this issue, the continent will have to invest in tertiary education and catch up with the rest of the world.
- The interactive discussions also raised the issues relating to the post-2015 development agenda. Africa has been engaged in defining this agenda. UNECA, in collaboration with the African Union, is supporting a dialogue driven by Africans in the spirit of NEPAD.