

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS (DESA)

Support to NEPAD

Period of Report: July 2008 to June 2009

Collaboration with other UN agencies in support of NEPAD

The Division for Sustainable Development (DSD), in partnership with UNDP, supports capacity building initiatives for the planning of water-related national strategies and infrastructure development in line with related MDGs. Many African countries are beneficiaries of DSD technical assistance and advisory services in the development and implementation of integrated water resources management (IWRM) plans, development and testing of water sector monitoring methodologies, and promotion of water provision and energy services for rural poverty reduction. In Mauritania, DSD has designed and is currently supporting the first IWRM approach in the country. This initiative is undertaken in collaboration with UNDP, the African Water Facility of the African Development Bank and the European Union. DSD has successfully initiated a water monitoring project in Ethiopia, including conducting workshops to define IWRM indicators. Another important project in Togo has contributed to the development of an IWRM plan, a road map as well as a national water code.

The Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination (OESC) has launched a Development Account project, entitled “Enhancing National Capacities for the Effective Implementation of the United Nations Development Agenda and Assessment of Progress”. This project aims to strengthen the capacity of national governments in assessing the implementation of their National Development Strategies. In order to assist the countries to make assessment of the progress in implementation, National Voluntary Presentation workshops are being held at the national level. These workshops enable countries to draft national reports and enhance capacity of countries to engage with the Council. The project also assists countries in analyzing trends that highlight progress or lack thereof of Member States in the achievement of the IADGs, including the MDGs.

The Secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) has worked in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) to further advance sustainable forest management activities and enhance regional-global interactions on forest-related affairs. In preparation for the Forum’s eighth session (UNFF8), held in April 2009, ECA provided a thorough report highlighting the relevance of their work to forests, key developments in the field of forestry, as well as related efforts to achieve the MDG goal on ensuring environmental sustainability. Interregional approaches related to UNFF8 topics, such as the ECA Regional Action Program to combat desertification and mitigate impacts of drought were also described.

Advocacy work in support of Africa’s development

Development Policy and Analysis Division (DPAD)

Support to NEPAD by DPAD in the area of advocacy work falls broadly into two areas: (i) launching of a technical cooperation project to support NEPAD objectives and (ii) monitoring

and analysis of development issues in Africa. Under the UN Development Account, a technical cooperation project, “Realizing the Millennium Development Goals Through Socially Inclusive Macroeconomic Policies” is currently being implemented in Senegal, South Africa and Uganda. The project focuses on modelling a core set of MDGs related to reduction of extreme poverty, education and provision of adequate health, water and sanitation facilities. The MDG Gap Task Force, created by the Secretary-General, also aims to systematically track existing international commitments and their fulfilment at the international and country level in the areas of official development assistance, market access, debt relief, access to essential medicines and technology. Issues related to economic, political and environmental vulnerability are covered in the World Economic Social Survey (WESS) 2008. WESS 2008 also examines how national Governments can reduce the risks associated with these vulnerabilities and provide support in the event of their occurrence. The World Economic Situation and Prospects 2009, a joint product of DESA, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the five United Nations regional commissions, provides an overview of recent global economic performance by region and gives short-term prospects of key global economic policy and development issues.

Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM)

DPADM support for NEPAD mainly encompasses upstream initiatives in support of the NEPAD Governance and Public Administration program as well as poverty reduction in Africa. The main activities comprise the following:

(i) Support to the Pan African Conference of Ministers of Local Government: A conference focusing on the leadership capacity building for poverty reduction in Africa entitled “From Policy to Implementation: Challenges and Strategies for Effective Implementation of Decentralized Governance in Africa” was held in Yaoundé, Cameroon in June 2008. A pre-conference seminar on “Strengthening Women’s Leadership in Local Government for Effective Decentralized Governance and Poverty Reduction in Africa: Roles, Challenges and Strategies” was held at the end of May 2008.

(ii) Support for professionalizing human resource management in the public sector in Africa: DPADM has been working with human resource managers in the public service in Africa to establish an institutional mechanism for building their professional capacities. The Working Group prepared documents for establishing the “Africa Public Sector Human Resource Managers’ Network (APS-HRMnet)” with the overall objective to provide human resource managers with a networking platform for advocacy, human resources management, professional development and information and knowledge sharing.

(iii) Strengthening of decentralized cooperation between European and African local governments: UNDESA and European Regional Assemblies, as well as local governments in Africa, are collaborating within the Euro-African Partnerships for Decentralized Governance Project to strengthen the capacities of local governments through decentralized cooperation.

(iv) Strengthening of parliamentary information systems through the application of information and communication technologies in collaboration with the Pan-African parliament: UNDESA, in collaboration with the Pan-African Parliament, has implemented the Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan in all African parliaments, including the Pan-Africa Parliament.

(v) Support to the African Association for Public Administration and Management: UNDESA has continued to collaborate with AAPAM to enhance the knowledge and skills of public servants in Africa.

(vi) Implementing standards of excellence in public administration education and training: UNDESA organized a workshop to discuss how to strengthen the capacities of Management Development Institutes (MDIs) in Africa. The aim of the workshop was to apply standards of excellence in public administration education and training in these institutes so as to improve their performance.

(vii) Support for the design of a methodology for poverty monitoring and evaluation: DPADM implemented a regional project in close cooperation with the African Statistical Organization (AFRISTAT); the output of which was a common methodological framework for poverty monitoring and evaluation.

(viii) Support for the establishment of Poverty Observatories: Observatories were designed as a tool for government, civil society organizations and international partners to follow-up on the implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy monitoring, evaluation and consultation processes.

(ix) Support for the training, dissemination and sensitization of the concepts of human development and pro-poor policies: DPADM has supported and supervised the elaboration of National Human Development Reports in many countries, including Mauritania, Mali, Cameroun, Burkina Faso and Gabon. DPADM has also conducted numerous training sessions on human development and/or pro-poor policies in countries such as Comoros, Chad, Cameroon, Mali, Mauritania and Guinea.

(x) Support for capacity assessment to achieve the MDGs: DPADM successfully supervised a capacity assessment exercise in Guinea.

(xi) Support for the design and implementation of Poverty Reduction Strategies: DPADM successfully implemented a project in Chad that supported all the steps necessary for the design of the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) of that country. DPADM is now also focusing on a number of countries to strengthen the link between PRS and their budgets.

(xii) Maintaining information portals: During 2008, DPADM continued to maintain the portal on conflict transformation and the Africa Governance Inventory (AGI).

Division for Sustainable Development (DSD)

DSD implemented the following three projects in Africa:

(i) International Partnerships for New and Emerging Technologies for Sustainable Development: to provide support to Ghana and Senegal in developing master plans/road maps for science and technology parks. The project is supportive of the objectives of Africa's science and technology Consolidated Plan of Action.

(ii) Capacity-building for Inter-regional Electricity Access and Supply in Africa: to strengthen the capacity of regional economic communities (RECs) and their member States to establish the appropriate policy, institutional and regulatory frameworks for regional electricity grid interconnection, in order to increase access to electricity and security of supply. Project implementation is being undertaken in close cooperation with the African Union, UNECA, and the technical secretariats of power pools. Activities will concentrate on the central and eastern sub-regions.

(iii) Strengthening national capacity for the integration of sustainable development principles into development strategies in countries emerging from conflict: In cooperation with ECA, ESCAP, UNEP, UNDP, DPA, DPKO, PBSO and Country Teams, project activities will focus on adapting and developing methodologies related to the process, content, implementation and monitoring of sustainable development strategies in countries emerging from conflict, test their applicability and make them available to all interested countries.

DSD, as mandated by the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), has also developed a dynamic programme to promote the development of partnerships for sustainable development in support of implementation of agreed commitments in the African region.

Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD)

In the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development,” DSPD discussed how African Governments and their development partners can address the social dimensions of NEPAD’s various plans of action in areas such as governance, agricultural development, infrastructure development, health and education. The report highlights the importance of social inclusion, social protection, global partnerships and the need to strengthen data collection on the social dimensions of NEPAD. Among its recommendations, the report underscores the importance of elevating and promoting Africa’s social development agenda and in particular recommends that ministries dealing with social development issues work closely with other relevant line ministries as well as with civil society organizations and the private sector in the design, implementation, and evaluation of social development goals. Other key recommendations include promoting and protecting social justice, equality, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all; adopting comprehensive social protection policies; promoting full employment and decent work agenda; addressing chronic poverty and hunger by launching an African Green Revolution; and empowerment of women, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, migrants, indigenous peoples, and other disadvantaged groups through access to productive resources. At the international level, the report underscores the importance of Africa’s development partners to live up to their commitments to international development cooperation to complement the efforts of African countries.

Secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)

The thematic issues of the eighth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF8) which comprise the loss of forest cover, forest degradation, desertification, climate change and forest biodiversity conservation, as well as the means of implementation were given high priority in the work of many regional and sub-regional African organizations. Based on regional reports submitted to UNFF8, African priorities for strengthening interaction with the UNFF and advancing implementation on sustainable forest management were closely linked with major efforts to achieve overall sustainable development and to eradicate poverty. The Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) addressed the relationship between social migration and the pressures of desertification, forest degradation and climate change. Impacts from desertification on the production of food and the rise of food insecurity were further covered by the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA). Through its Common Enhancement Policy for the Environment, the Union has addressed these and other sub-regional challenges, including the decline of forest biodiversity and natural habitat destruction due to bush meat hunting and the over-exploitation of wild flora and fauna. Through regional inputs and organized discussions on UNFF8 topics, several key aspects in support of African development were also addressed by the Southern African Development Community, the Central African Forests Commission and the Congo Basin Forest Partnership.