

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (OHCHR)

Support to NEPAD

Major activities

OHCHR initiated a process of consultation with African stakeholders known as African Dialogues, supportive to African-led initiatives such as NEPAD:

- In November 2001, OHCHR organised its first African Dialogue bringing together African Governments, human rights experts, national institutions and civil society representatives. One of the main recommendations of the Dialogue called upon OHCHR to engage the NEPAD Secretariat with a view to seeking a role as partners in resource mobilisation, projects sponsorship and implementation in the democracy and good governance, rule of law, human rights, poverty eradication, HIV/AIDS and peace and security areas and sectors;
- The Second African Dialogue was organised in May 2002 on the theme of *"Promoting Justice and Reconciliation in Africa: Challenges for Human Rights and Development"* in collaboration with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). The meeting adopted recommendations on strategies for building effective national and regional capacities and institutions for dealing with justice and reconciliation contained in African development initiatives such as NEPAD.
- In July 2002, OHCHR convened a workshop on the theme "NEPAD, Human Rights and OHCHR" during the Inaugural Summit of the AU in Durban, South Africa. This workshop was welcomed by participants as a first step and unique opportunity to infuse ideas on the practical implementation of human rights standards in the NEPAD process.

- In August 2002, OHCHR organised an African Youth Consultation, in Accra, Ghana. The consultation was attended by some 20 youth organizations from African Commonwealth countries. Discussions focused on achievements made in light of the Durban Conference, particularly provisions regarding the youth and measures required for their follow-up as well as their integration within the NEPAD process.

- OHCHR organized a follow-up meeting to the Durban Workshop during the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg, South Africa in August 2002. This workshop provided another opportunity for an exchange of views on the underlying principles and NEPAD objectives of enhancing development and alleviating poverty in Africa and the fundamental role of human rights, democracy, good governance and the rule of law in attaining these goals. It was also welcomed as a unique opportunity for participants to achieve a better understanding of the NEPAD process.

- OHCHR has been working with the AU, NEPAD, UN and other regional institutions to:

1. Ensure the mainstreaming of human rights within the sub-regional and regional organisations that make up the building blocks of the AU. In March 2003, OHCHR organized an African Experts meeting focusing on the role of African Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in the promotion and protection of human rights within the context of NEPAD. All the RECs were represented at this meeting.

2. Support the NEPAD structures to ensure that the APRM process gives priority to the respect for human rights and the rule of law. In collaboration with other UN Agencies within the framework adopted at Annual Regional Consultation of UN Agencies Working in Africa, OHCHR continues to facilitate discussions on the importance of the protection and promotion of human rights, the rule of law and the administration of justice in the NEPAD process. In this context, OHCHR is the facilitator of the sub-cluster on promoting a rights-based approach to development by fostering a culture of respect for fundamental human rights (including humanitarian and refugee laws), the rule of law and good governance. The Office is responsible for ensuring co-ordination and implementation of the matrix of activities approved for the cluster's joint activities.

3. Assist in the drafting and preparation of all the background documents for the Peer Review Process. The Acting High Commissioner participated in the inauguration of the Eminent Person Panel in July 2003.

4. In December 2003, in collaboration with UNDP, OHCHR sponsored a Regional Workshop for African Parliamentarians and civil society on the APRM.

OHCHR action is presently focused on:

- Facilitating the preparation of the handbook, *"Human Rights Based Approach to NEPAD"*;
- Exploring the possibility of organising a brainstorming session for members of the APRM to discuss bringing human rights indicators to reality during the national review processes; and
- Supporting the Peer Review process by seconding a human rights officer for a short-term period to assist the APRM secretariat develop a framework for effective mainstreaming of human rights in the country support process.