

## **Africa: Senior UN Adviser On Africa Says Peace Remains the Main Challenge for Development**

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Presenting a mixed report card on African development over the past five years, the top United Nations adviser on the continent warned today that the challenge for all Africans is to put in place the conditions for lasting peace or risk all the progress made in infrastructure, education, health and other areas under the region's common development strategy coming to nothing.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was adopted by the continent's leaders five years ago, Legwaila Joseph Legwaila, Secretary-General Kofi Annan's Special Adviser on Africa, told reporters, emphasizing that it was an "African initiative" that lays out an agreed vision of social and economic development.

"Unless there is peace on the continent, of course, all the projects under NEPAD will come to nought and therefore the struggle followed by the Africans is to make sure that we can create conditions on the continent for peace to prevail and of course if peace prevails, development will flourish," said Mr. Legwaila.

He acknowledged that people were often sceptical as to whether peace was advancing in Africa, but picked out several countries, including Liberia and Sierra Leone, as showing the way forward although at the same time acknowledging that they needed support.

"Progress has been made although people sometimes are confused by the fact that most of the peacekeeping forces by the United Nations are in Africa because most of the conflict is located in Africa."

"People think that there is no progress. There is progress. Burundi - the peace process there was successful, although there are some little difficulties and then of course we have Liberia, Sierra Leone. These are countries which were helped by the United Nations to end conflict."

Earlier in the day, the General Assembly began debating Mr. Annan's latest report on NEPAD and international support for the strategy, with its President, Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa of Bahrain, similarly acknowledging progress had been made on the continent but also calling for more to be done.

"It is encouraging to note that the report recognized progress in the key priority areas of NEPAD ranging from infrastructure to information and communication technologies, to education and health, environment, agriculture, science and technology, gender mainstreaming and the African Peer Review Mechanism," she told the Assembly.

"The report reflects the recognition of the progress made since last year, but also underlines the importance of undertaking policy measures to accelerate its implementation."

Also on Africa, the Assembly started debate today on Mr. Annan's report on the causes and prevention of conflict on the continent, which notes that, while steady progress is being made in preventing strife, "increased and concerted action is needed to prevent simmering crises from escalating and to ensure that the hard-won peace in countries emerging from conflict becomes irreversible."

The gathering of 192 Member States also discussed the decade of rolling back malaria in developing countries initiative - particularly in Africa, with Sheikha Haya quoting World Health Organization (WHO) figures to the Assembly showing that the disease continues to threaten the lives of at least three billion people in 107 countries and territories.