

**Regional Media Dialogue in support of the  
New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)  
Held in The Vaal, South Africa, 19-20 February 2009**

## **Key Recommendations**

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Recognizing the important role the media continue to play in the development of Africa, a Regional Media Dialogue took place in The Vaal, Gauteng Province, South Africa, from February 19-20, 2009, to deliberate on how this role can be strengthened. In this regard, participants agreed on the following recommendations in four (4) key areas addressed to all the stakeholders in the development processes of the continent: the media, the African Union Commission/NEPAD Secretariat, UN agencies and the African Development Bank:

### **A Training and Capacity Strengthening for the African media**

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1. AU Commission and NEPAD Secretariat should support capacity development initiatives for African media, particularly training and capacity strengthening to enable them report better on developmental issues, including AU/NEPAD programmes;
2. An external audit of African media's reporting of events on the continent should be undertaken by AU and NEPAD to identify gaps and address the challenges;
3. A team of communication experts and experienced media professionals should be put in place to assess training needs of practicing journalists in view of making concrete proposals for training programmes;
4. Need to undertake a more in-depth analysis of performance of Africa's media working on the continent to better understand the context within which African media operates;

### **B Strengthening of Comm. & Advocacy Unit at NEPAD Secretariat**

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5. There is an urgent need to strengthen the communication and advocacy units of the NEPAD Secretariat;
6. A communications audit of the NEPAD Secretariat should be undertaken so as to identify strengths and weaknesses in NEPAD's communication and outreach activities, with a view to emplace a highly effective and functional communications unit;
7. NEPAD Secretariat should strive to provide information in a manner that is media-friendly, relevant and useful to the media and the African audience, and not in abstract and technical language;

8. NEPAD Secretariat should establish clear channels of communication with the media to facilitate more effective dissemination of information about NEPAD, its programme implementation and governance structures;
  9. NEPAD Secretariat should take necessary steps to improve the frequency and quality of development information;
  10. In marketing the AU/NEPAD brand, advocacy activities should dwell more on sectoral priority issues such as infrastructure, agriculture and food security, health, education, and others which directly affect the ordinary African;
  11. Media should seek to communicate the core values and principles of NEPAD rather than simply trying to promote its brand name;
  12. Greater awareness of the information required and desired by end-users should be created by the officials charged with the task of communicating NEPAD in the NEPAD Secretariat information;
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## C Professional support to the media

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13. Media should be involved from the beginning of major development projects as partners and stakeholders and not just as tools to be invited to report on the launching of major AU/NEPAD initiatives;
14. African media personnel should routinely interact with the communication staff of the NEPAD Secretariat in order to have adequate knowledge of news preferences. This would help the Secretariat's Communications and Outreach Unit tailor its press releases and feature pieces to the satisfaction of the needs of the media;
15. Media personnel should show more commitment to developmental reporting, since the media also stand to gain and to prosper from the development of other sectors such as infrastructure, education and health;
16. Senior media officials in Africa should act as role models for younger colleagues in their commitment to Africa's development, by exhibiting the positive side and future in development journalism;
17. Partnership with media should be strengthened as this would bring the much-needed expertise to the NEPAD Secretariat. Such partnership could focus on critical sector-specific areas including gender development issues and HIV prevention. This will help create awareness on the opportunities and challenges facing vulnerable groups in Africa;
18. Media organizations should strengthen collaboration with governments, civil society organizations and development partners to facilitate acceleration towards universal

- access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support as well as attaining the MDGs;
- 19 NEPAD Secretariat should seek to support the media and press freedom in African countries where such principles and rights do not presently exist for media practitioners to effectively carry out their duties;
  - 20 NEPAD Secretariat should establish a proactive and effective media liaison function which will focus on Africa's national, sub-regional and continental issues;
  - 21 AU Commission and NEPAD Secretariat should facilitate media access to officials;
  - 22 AU Commission and NEPAD Secretariat should engage non-traditional media outlets in disseminating and informing the African public about NEPAD implementation;
  - 23 NEPAD Secretariat should create excellence awards in different categories of human endeavor in Africa and synergize NEPAD related communication strategies for quality control and consistency in information dissemination.

#### **D Provision of financial and technical assistance to the media**

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24. African Union Commission, NEPAD Secretariat, UN agencies, AfDB, RECs, and other stakeholders in the NEPAD platform should allocate enough financial, technical and human resources to match the communication needs of the NEPAD Secretariat;
25. NEPAD Secretariat should be ready to share the burden of communication with African and other willing partner institutions;
26. The NEPAD Spokesperson should provide information to the media in a more timely and efficient manner;
27. Emphasis on the urgent need for sustained investment in the communications sector and the media in particular by Africans and their partners;
28. Explore possibilities of appointing Goodwill Ambassadors for the AUC to serve as champions of African causes;
29. Use of the forthcoming 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa as a platform to attract global attention to positive news out of Africa, particularly the progress being made in the continent's development.